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Workforce composition, qualifications and professional development in Montessori early childhood education and care settings in England

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Dr Stephanie Bennett, The Open University
September 2020

This research was commissioned by Montessori St. Nicholas Charity.

Authors: Professor Jane Payler and Dr Stephanie Bennett, September 2020.

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Most of all, we would like to thank the survey participants who took time out their busy daily responsibilities to respond thoughtfully to the questions. An accident of timing meant the duration that the survey remained open straddled the run up to, and a significant part of, the national lockdown from COVID-19. Although the survey was not designed to reflect the COVID situation, but rather to capture workforce and professional development of 'normal' times, we acknowledge the tremendous extra strain that ECEC settings were under during the survey. That we had any responses at all, let alone thoughtful ones, is a testament to their professionalism and their dedication to the sector. Thank you.

Professor Jane Payler, Professor of Early Childhood Education, Open University
Dr Stephanie Bennett, Associate Lecturer in Psychology, Open University

Foreword

Others have written about the state of the early years sector and the challenges of recruiting and retaining staff; the lack of status of the people who work in early years education and the fact that the number of people seeking to work in early years has dropped rapidly in the last 5 years.

There is a perception that Montessori nurseries are immune from these challenges because they are seen as somehow 'privileged' or 'elitist'. We believe that this is part of a complete misperception about Montessori in general.

This research by the OU is a start in trying to create a true picture of Montessori in the UK.

Leonor Stjepic, CEO of Montessori Group

Executive summary

Context

The national context in England is of an early childhood education and care (ECEC) workforce that is generally characterised by a high proportion of young, largely female employees with lower than average qualification levels to comparable sectors, high staff turnover, poor pay, and restricted professional development opportunities, but carrying out demanding and responsible work. Within this context, the research reported here examines the workforce, professional development and qualifications of Montessori settings within the Montessori Schools Association (MSA) in England.

Methodology

An online survey with a mix of closed and open text questions using the Qualtrics survey tool was administered through the MSA to 350 Montessori ECEC settings in England between February 2020 and mid-June 2020, overlapping the Covid-19 national lockdown, a very difficult time for ECEC. A response rate of 22% was achieved with 77 responding settings. Responding settings comprised nursery schools (46%), day nurseries (24%) and childminders (12%). Analysis was undertaken using SPSS26 for descriptive statistics and NVivo 12 Plus for qualitative thematic analysis. All responses were anonymous, and no identifying data were collected.

Key points from findings and discussion

Demographic features of the workforce

The Montessori workforce has more older staff members than the general ECEC workforce in England and fewer staff members under 25 years. Only 9.9% of Montessori staff were aged between 16-25 years, whereas the general ECEC workforce has 20% who are aged 24 years or less (CEEDA, 2019b). Montessori had 49.3% of its staff members aged 40 years and over, whereas across the general ECEC workforce 36% of staff are aged over 41 years (CEEDA, 2019b). Forward planning is necessary for the Montessori workforce as 13.4% of staff are aged 55 years or over and so will be approaching retirement during the next 10 years. The Montessori workforce has potentially more members identifying as male, with 95% female and 5% male, than the general ECEC workforce, which ranged from 1-7% (NDNA, 2019) or 4% (CEEDA, 2019a).

A higher proportion of the Montessori workforce is White at 89.1% compared to the general ECEC workforce at 86.9% (Bonetti, 2019). The Montessori workforce employs slightly higher proportions of non-EU staff from outside the UK at 3.8% compared to the general ECEC sector at 3.6% (NDNA, 2019). However, the Montessori workforce employs lower proportions of staff who are EU nationals from outside the UK at 8.3%, compared to the general ECEC sector at 10.8% (NDNA, 2019). It is worth noting that these percentages could indicate future recruitment and labour supply shortages should rights to work in the UK of the people affected be altered during the final Brexit agreements, or should other policy changes to immigration occur.

Qualifications

Most Montessori staff (53%) have either level 3 (28.8%) or level 4 (24.4%) qualifications, indicating that the qualification levels *up to* level 4 tend to be higher than the national ECEC picture of 52% with level 3 as the highest qualification (NDNA, 2019). The most commonly held Montessori

qualification in the survey was level 4, the MCI Diploma (63% of staff with a Montessori qualification). CEEDA estimates that 76% of the general ECEC workforce had qualifications at level 3 or above (CEEDA, 2019c, p.2), whereas the figure for the Montessori workforce is 80.6% of staff with qualifications at level 3 or above. CEEDA estimated that 13% of the general ECEC held qualifications at level 6 or above (CEEDA, 2019c, p.2), which is considerably lower than the Montessori figure of 21.9% of staff at level 6 or above. Previous Montessori research showed that in 2013 19% of staff held a PGCE or EYPS -eligible now to be referred to as EYT (MSA 2013), while the results of this current study show only 11.9% of Montessori staff holding either QTS, PGCE or EYT. Montessori ECEC settings may be finding it more difficult to recruit staff with such qualifications, as is the case for the whole sector, partly owing to financial pressures and partly to fewer such staff being available.

Around 12.4% of Montessori staff were currently studying for higher level qualifications, most studying for level 3 or level 4. This is lower than across the general ECEC workforce, in which 14.9% of staff were studying for higher qualifications in 2018 (Bonetti, 2019). However, this national figure could have dropped since 2018 as the trend from 2008 through 2013 to 2018 had shown falling levels of staff studying for higher level qualifications (Bonetti, 2019). Of those Montessori staff studying for a higher-level Montessori qualification, most were studying for the MCI Diploma at level 4 (66%).

Professional development and training

All Montessori settings engage in professional development and training; many focus on mandatory courses. Montessori settings reported that challenges to staff training and qualifications were primarily costs of courses, costs of staff cover, the timing of courses, and limited access (Demand and supply). Courses were often at the wrong time of day for operational efficiency, but courses at evenings and weekends threatened staff free time. Rural locations of settings made access to courses difficult. Courses that had previously been provided at low cost or free of charge by local authorities were no longer available, or were now charged for, had limited places and offered far less range. Settings found it difficult to judge which courses beyond local authority provision were worth paying for. A further cost issue was the pressure and desire to pay staff who had gained higher level qualifications a higher salary, but the inability to do so owing to the low funding levels.

Montessori settings reported lack of access to a wide range of Montessori professional development training at appropriate levels, in appropriate formats or locations, and lack of access to Montessori trained staff when vacancies occurred. Cost was an issue; no government funding was available for undertaking Montessori qualifications. More needed to be done to enhance understanding and recognition of Montessori qualifications. Plans for professional development across Montessori settings, apart from more Montessori training, were to update knowledge and practice regarding special educational needs and disabilities, speech and language, and outdoor learning.

Deployment of staff

As is the case across the ECEC sector, higher qualified staff in Montessori nurseries were more likely to be deployed to work directly with 3 and 4-year-olds, while lower qualified staff were deployed to work with the under 3-year-olds.

Employment issues

Of the Montessori staff in the survey, 47.3% had been with the same employer for 5 years or more, higher than the general ECEC workforce of 44% with the same employer for at least 5 years (Bonetti 2019). Forty-five per cent of Montessori staff have worked in the ECEC sector for over 10 years. Amongst the Montessori settings, 26% reported a current vacancy, compared to the national ECEC picture of a 24% staff turnover rate (NDNA, 2019). Reasons for staff leaving Montessori settings were similar to the reasons given at a national level, primarily family reasons such as following maternity leave (51%), or moving to a different sector for better pay (33.3%). Of the Montessori staff in the survey, 46.9% earned over £10 per hour and 37.9% earned between £8.50 and £10. It seems that Montessori salaries are slightly higher on average than those in the general ECEC sector. However, there were also 7.6% of Montessori staff earning less than £8 per hour.

Montessori settings reported the biggest recruitment challenges over the last two years to have been the lack of access to Montessori trained staff or staff with a sufficiently high quality of Montessori practice. It was very costly to advertise for Montessori staff, which often did not bring results of suitably trained or qualified applicants. Difficulties in recruiting suitably qualified staff generally is a national concern (NDNA, 2019). Of the Montessori settings in the survey, although staff turnover was reported, 48.8% of settings stated no intention to recruit. Montessori apprenticeships were a possible route towards better recruitment, if available.

Quality and Indices of Multiple Deprivation

Montessori settings in the survey had higher Ofsted ratings than the general ECEC sector. All Montessori settings in the survey had ratings of Good (53.3%) or Outstanding (46.7%), compared to ECEC settings nationally, at 97% Good (73%) or Outstanding (24%). Montessori settings in the survey had a much higher proportion of settings rated as Outstanding than the national picture. Although Montessori settings in the survey were found in locations across the full range of Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) scores, they were more likely to be found in the lowest areas of deprivation. Forty-two per cent of Montessori settings were in the highest two deciles of IMD, meaning they were in the areas of lowest deprivation. Only 9.7% of Montessori settings were found in the lowest three deciles of IMD, meaning they were in the areas of highest deprivation.

Conclusions

Well qualified, experienced Montessori staff and higher Ofsted ratings

- The Montessori workforce has a higher proportion of staff at level 3 or above than the general ECEC workforce in England and a higher proportion of staff with level 6 or above qualifications, although the picture is slightly complicated by differing means of collecting data.
- More Montessori staff have been with their employer for over five years than across the general ECEC workforce. Forty-five per cent of Montessori staff have worked in the ECEC sector for over 10 years.
- Montessori settings in the survey were more likely to have achieved a Good or Outstanding Ofsted rating than the general ECEC sector, particularly a rating of Outstanding.

Threats to maintaining qualification levels, difficulties in professional development and poor external recognition of Montessori qualifications

- There appears to be a falling proportion of Montessori staff with PGCE/QTS/EYT compared to Montessori staff in 2013.

- Slightly fewer Montessori staff were studying for qualifications than the general ECEC workforce, against a national pattern of falling rates.
- A range of difficulties are faced in Montessori settings regarding professional development. These are mainly high costs, staff cover, poor timing of courses, access to courses and difficulties in deciding which courses are worth doing. There appeared to be fewer accessible choices for professional development at greater costs and with less assurance of making the right choices for quality enhancement and value.
- Access to Montessori training, access to qualified Montessori staff for recruitment, and recognition and support for Montessori qualifications outside Montessori were all felt to be challenging and in need of improvement.

Insecure future supply of trained Montessori workforce and with limited diversity

- The Montessori workforce is older than the general ECEC workforce. It has a higher proportion of males than in general according to some national estimates, and a higher proportion than Montessori had in 2013.
- The Montessori workforce is predominantly White compared to the general ECEC workforce. It employs lower proportions (12.1%) of non-EU non-UK staff and EU staff from outside the UK than the general ECEC workforce (14.4%).
- Current vacancies in the Montessori workforce are at 26%, slightly higher than in the general ECEC workforce, with staff primarily leaving for family reasons or improved pay in a different sector.
- The Montessori workforce appears to be slightly higher paid than the general ECEC workforce, although up-to-date comparisons are difficult to make. This may reflect the higher proportions of older, more experienced and more highly qualified staff in the Montessori workforce.
- Recruitment of Montessori qualified staff is expensive and difficult to achieve, with suggestions that there was a shortage of Montessori qualified staff available.

Montessori provision is more likely to be in areas of lower disadvantage and, within settings, higher qualified staff are deployed with older children

- Montessori settings are more likely to be in areas of low deprivation than provision across the general ECEC sector.
- Higher qualified Montessori staff were more likely to be deployed to work directly with older children than with younger children and babies.

Recommendations

- Consider how to plan for the replenishment of the Montessori workforce, often with level 4 qualifications, whose members will retire up to the next 10 years. Consider the through-flow of Montessori training places and whether, and if so how, they may need to be increased and supported to ensure a ready supply of Montessori qualified staff.
- Ensure that a ready supply of Montessori trained degree level teaching staff is coming through for employment in the next few years. This might include short Montessori training courses for Early Childhood Studies Degree graduates or similar.

- Encourage recruitment of a more diverse Montessori workforce with more staff from minority ethnic groups and more males.
- Consider plans for amelioration regarding potential labour supply difficulties if immigration policy changes or Brexit agreements mean a loss of staff from non-EU non-UK backgrounds or EU but outside UK backgrounds.
- Promote more fully outside the Montessori sector the equivalence of Montessori qualifications and the benefits of the Montessori approach.
- Consider the viability, accessibility and delivery of a variety of Montessori qualifications and professional development courses including:
 - online, but well-supported courses;
 - rural locations;
 - aiming at varying levels and with varying lengths;
 - bite-sized, but with credit accumulation;
 - Montessori apprenticeships;
 - return to Montessori or Montessori awareness courses;
 - special educational needs and disabilities;
 - speech and language development;
 - outdoor learning.
- Consider ways to encourage more pedagogic leadership for babies and children aged under 3 years from more highly qualified Montessori staff.
- Consider the feasibility of encouraging more Montessori provision in areas of higher disadvantage, including lobbying for government support to make Montessori ECEC more accessible to children in disadvantaged areas.
- Lobby for higher ECEC funding levels.
- Lobby for better national and local government strategic guidance, support and funding for professional development. Lobby for funding to support Montessori training.

1 Introduction and context

Much research has been published regarding professional and workforce development of early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings in England, in the UK and across the world (for example see overviews: Payler and Davis, 2017; Waters, Payler and Jones 2018; National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) 2019, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2019). Findings tell us that the ECEC workforce in the England is relatively young in comparison to other sectors, predominantly female and with limited change over the last 10 years (see section 1.1 for references). Staff turnover is higher than average for other sectors with many staff qualified at Level 3 leaving the sector for better paid jobs elsewhere. The workforce tends to be young, less well qualified and less experienced, and higher skilled experienced staff are leaving the workforce mid-career or are approaching retirement. Since an initially successful drive from 2006 to increase the number of graduates in the workforce, recruitment to Early Years Teacher Status training has fallen in recent years (Payler, 2018). Economic retrenchment since the global economic crisis of 2008 and a shift in government in 2010 meant that targets for qualification increases in the ECEC workforce were dropped in England and structures and provision of integrated services were unpicked. Investment continued in training of the early years workforce, but with a new direction of 'childcare' with the aim of increasing the female workforce. (Payler and Davis, 2017).

In summary, the ECEC workforce in the UK has, to some extent, shifted to one with higher levels of qualification since 2006, although there have been falling qualification levels in more recent years. However, qualification levels have not been reflected in policies *requiring* higher levels of qualification nor in status, pay, career opportunities or terms of service. Demands on the ECEC sector have increased, funding has become ever more strained and challenges remain in recruiting and paying qualified staff. While qualification levels have risen to some extent across the sector, this is not matched by a comparable rise in salaries (Payler and Davis, 2017). The workforce is hampered by a lack of coherence in policy relating to qualifications and associated career progression.

High quality early childhood education and care is acknowledged to have an important role in securing successful learning and development of the population and acts as an effective investment that enables people to reach their potential while preventing adverse outcomes. The ECEC workforce is known to play an important part in establishing and maintaining the quality of provision, with well-trained, well-supervised and well-rewarded staff contributing to higher quality. Since ECEC in England comprises largely private, voluntary and independent provision with a variety of approaches, including Montessori, up to date information about the composition of the Montessori workforce and its professional development makes a useful contribution to the knowledge base about ECEC in England.

Professor Jane Payler and Dr Stephanie Bennett of the Open University were commissioned by Montessori St Nicholas Charity to design and lead an online survey to investigate the workforce characteristics, professional development and qualifications of staff across Montessori early childhood settings in England. The survey questions were agreed with Montessori St. Nicholas Charity (MSN Charity, the funding body) and ethical approval gained from the Open University Human Research Ethics Committee. The survey questions were developed to be cognisant of previous published national surveys of ECEC workforce composition, qualifications and professional development.

The MSN Charity's mission aims to:

- Provide and sustain national quality assured and accredited Montessori teacher training in the UK and abroad;
- Support charitable projects that help extend awareness of the benefits of Montessori education;
- Support schools and teachers in membership of the Montessori Schools Association (MSA) through training and operational advice;
- Promote and extend the national accreditation system to Montessori schools across the UK;
- Conduct research into the effectiveness of Montessori education and evaluate all MSN services to ensure the highest levels of delivery.

Montessori St. Nicholas Charity's Montessori Schools Association (MSA) is a professional association that supports Montessori schools and teachers throughout the UK. Montessori St. Nicholas Charity requested that the survey be administered to settings in England within the MSA through the contact lists owned by Montessori St. Nicholas Charity MSA. MSA members choose to be members of the professional association and pay a membership fee to enable them to access support and networks.

The aim of the commissioned survey was to seek current data on Montessori ECEC settings in England on the composition of the workforce, qualifications and professional development, and to compare those data with published data on national general ECEC workforce composition and qualifications. Objectives were to:

- Carry out an online survey targeted to MSA Montessori ECEC settings in England to gather data on workforce composition and qualifications;
- Compare the analysed results of the Montessori survey with contemporary data on workforce composition and qualifications for general ECEC settings across the UK;
- Bring findings together in a full report of the research;
- Present the findings of the research at a launch/dissemination event, date and location to be agreed.

The report is structured as follows:

Section 1: After the introduction, this section briefly reviews previous national research on ECEC workforce and professional development in England (1.1). It then summaries findings from previous, relevant Montessori-focused research (1.2).

Section 2: The methodology explains the procedures undertaken, the methods of analysis and the tools used. It explains ethical issues including anonymity and confidentiality.

Section 3: Findings are presented from the quantitative and qualitative analyses undertaken pertaining to demographics of the Montessori workforce; qualifications of the workforce; professional development and training; employment issues; and settings' characteristics.

Section 4: The discussion raises key points and issues from across the findings from Montessori settings compared to the national picture in England across all ECEC settings.

Section 5: The report ends with conclusions and brief recommendations.

1.1 ECEC workforce and professional development in England: previous national research

1.1.1 Demographics of the workforce

The ECEC workforce in general shows limited diversity. However, exact figures are difficult to pinpoint and compare as data are collected in a piecemeal manner, according to differing criteria, and are subject to change over time, making trends and comparisons difficult to identify. There are, therefore, some apparent inconsistencies in summarising patterns.

Gender

Estimates of the proportion of staff identifying as male range as follows, showing some small increase in the percentage of males over time:

- In 2015 the workforce was 98% female according to Simon *et al.*, 2015 (cited in BERA-TACTYC, 2017, p.11).
- In 2018, 7.4% of childcare workers were male, although lower for nursery nurses and assistants at 1.8% or for childminders at 4% (Bonetti, 2019, p.6).
- In 2019, between 1-7% of workforce were male – fewer in small settings; more in bigger settings (NDNA, 2019, p.9)
- In all group-based provision in 2019, 3% of staff were female (DfE, 2019)
- The CEEDA Annual Report states that 4% of the workforce is male and 7% of all apprenticeship starters are male (CEEDA, 2019a)

Ethnicity and nationality

The ECEC workforce in England is largely White at 86.9% in 2018, which shows a decrease from 91.3% in 2013 (Bonetti 2019, p.19). This is similar to the *general* female workforce in England of 86.7% White in 2018 (88.9% in 2013) (Bonetti 2019, p.22). Diversity by nationality has increased slightly in recent years. In 2018, 6.2 per cent of the childcare workforce was born in a European Union country outside the UK (Bonetti 2019, p.19). In 2019, ECEC staff members who were from countries outside the EU accounted for 3.6% of the workforce, while 10.8% stated that they were EU Nationals born outside the UK (NDNA 2019, p.13). As CEEDA (2019b) points out, while 2.75% of the total early years workforce are EU nationals, London has the greatest reliance on EU nationals at 8.9% of all employees, followed by the South East at 2.7%. Whether and how the workforce will be affected following Brexit remains to be seen.

The figures appear to be slightly higher than those for the *general* female workforce in 2018 of which 78.8 % were born in England, 2.5 per cent in other UK countries, and 7.9% were born in other European Union countries (Bonetti 2019, p.25).

Age range

The ECEC workforce had an average age of 39 years in 2018, with some rise in the % of staff aged over 55 years (Bonetti 2019, p.17). It is interesting to note that 21% of highly qualified staff in the workforce at level 6 or above were aged over 50 years in 2018 and so could be reaching retirement age in 8-13 years (Bonetti 2018, p.4). Further, the NDNA Workforce Survey reported that 33% of staff are aged 18-20 years, mainly trainees and apprentices, which it claims reflects funding pressures to employ less qualified staff than those who are leaving (NDNA, 2019, p.8). Findings from

the CEEDA Early years workforce survey (2019b) suggest that 7% are aged 20 years or less, 13% are aged 21 to 24, 44% are aged 25 to 40 years and 36% are aged 41 plus. (CEEDA, 2019b).

1.1.2 Qualifications and training

Levels of qualifications across the ECEC sector have shown some turbulence in recent years. In general, the ECEC workforce has lower levels of qualification than the teaching workforce and the general female workforce (Bonetti, 2019, p.5). For example, in 2018 25.1% of childcare workers (according to the Labour Force Survey definition of childcare worker) had a degree as their highest qualification, compared to 92.9% of teachers and 37.1% of the total *general* female workforce (Bonetti, 2019, p.5). However, the proportion of childcare workers studying for a higher qualification fell from 22.7% in 2008 to 14.9% in 2018 (Bonetti, 2019, p.28). The NDNA 2019 Survey shows a drop by 8.4% of graduates working in the sector (NDNA, 2019, p. 7). This is unlikely to be helped by the annual fall in enrolment on Early Years Teacher (EYT) courses, which fell from 2,327 in the 2013/2014 academic year to just 365 new entrants in 2018-19.69 (CEEDA, 2019a, p.45). Many EYITT providers have since stopped providing the course. In 2018, there were approximately 15,000 trained EYTs, not accounting for those who had already left the sector. Yet a highly conservative estimate shows that over 58,000 specialist EYTs would be needed if all funded two- and three-year-old children were to have access to an EYT at a ratio of 1:13 (Payler, 2018, p.7). 'Overall, 86% of settings employing graduates identified clear benefits and impact from having higher qualified staff in their team-mix, a finding supported by other research, such as the evaluation of the Graduate Leader Fund' (CEEDA, 2019b, p.6).

Forty per cent of childcare workforce had NVQs as their highest qualification; of these, 25.7% were at levels 1 or 2 and 62.4% were at level 3 (Bonetti, 2019, p.27). The NDNA Workforce Survey 2019 suggests that 52% of staff working with children in ECEC settings have a level 3 qualification, a drop between 2016 and 2019 of 31% (NDNA, 2019, p. 7). Level 2 as highest qualification accounted for 17%, while 26% were unqualified assistants, trainees or apprentices (NDNA, 2019, p.6-7). The Department for Education survey of childcare providers states that staff with level 3 in group-based settings rose from 79% in 2016 to 81% in 2018. However, the DfE 2018 survey excluded apprentices (cited in NDNA, 2019, p. 7). CEEDA estimated that 76% of staff had level 3 in 2018, again reflecting a different methodology that included bank and agency staff, who play an important role in staffing ECEC settings (CEEDA, 2019b, p.2). CEEDA research identifies a rise in level 3 qualifications since the reinstatement of functional skills as entry qualifications in 2017, rather than GCSEs (CEEDA, 2019a, p.34). However, the rise has not yet compensated for the previous drop and settings still report a shortage of qualified level 3 applicants (CEEDA, 2019a, p.53).

Studying for higher qualifications and accessing training (Table 1.1) have both fallen as a percentage of childcare workers since 2008 (Bonetti, 2019a).

Table 1.1 Studying for higher qualifications and accessing training (Adapted from Bonetti, 2019a, p.6).

| Year | % studying for Higher qualification | % accessed training 3 months prior to survey |
|------|--|---|
| 2008 | 22.7 | 42.3 |
| 2013 | 17.2 | 38.8 |
| 2018 | 14.9 | 35.9 |

Professional development

Accessing professional development has become more challenging for many settings as local authority budgets have been so reduced that their professional development offers, ‘once the most popular sources of CPD’, have reduced dramatically and those available are largely charged (Bonetti, 2018, p.23). Most providers (55%) reported that they intend to spend less on training in the future, with lack of funding and increasing costs being the main reason; 39% said they would focus only on mandatory training (NDNA, 2019, p.14). Training intentions for the next 12 months were highest for training towards level 3 qualification (55%), followed by ‘Safeguarding (46%), identifying and supporting children with SEND (45%), observation, assessment and planning (45%), understanding and managing children’s behaviour (45%) and the theory and practice of supporting children’s learning (41%),’ (CEEDA, 2019c, Executive summary). Cost is the biggest barrier to training (56%), followed by challenges releasing staff (41%) and course timing (34%). However, 29% had no staff working towards qualifications (CEEDA, 2019c, p. 15).

1.1.3 Quality

Ofsted ratings of quality show an increase in ratings of good or outstanding for ECEC settings over recent years: 97% of non-domestic childcare was rated as good (73%) and outstanding (24%) in 2019, 79% as good or outstanding combined in 2012; 95% of childminders were rated as good (78%) and outstanding (17%) in 2018, 71% of childminders were rated as good or outstanding combined in 2012 (CEEDA, 2019a, p.16).

1.1.4 Employment issues

High staff turnover and low salaries have often been cited as characteristics of the ECEC workforce. In 2019, Bonetti reported that 44% of childcare workers had worked for the same employer for at least 5 years and 5.9% for 20 years or more, lower rates than for all employed women (Bonetti, 2019, p.36). While some staff work long hours, 40% work part-time with contracts for less than 35 hours per week (CEEDA, 2019b).

Recruitment and staff turnover

Seventy-seven per cent of employers stated that they had difficulties in recruiting staff trained at level 3, 40% said it was harder to recruit graduates and 34% reported that it was harder to recruit level 2 staff (NDNA, 2019, p. 9). Over 90% of settings reported that staff were leaving and only 9.6% stated that they expected no staff turnover during the year (NDNA, 2019, p.10). Findings from the NDNA survey showed a nursery staff turnover rate of 24%, higher than the UK average employee turnover rate (15-18%) (NDNA, 2019, p.11), although the CEEDA Annual report states a staff turnover rate in the ECEC sector as 15% (2019a, p.44). Most common reasons given for staff leaving were seeking a higher salary for levels 2 and 3 and moving to a school setting for graduates/EYTs

(NDNA 2019, p.12). Other reasons included a 'desire to work closer to home' perhaps also related to pay, and taking a career break after maternity leave (CEEDA, 2019b).

Salaries

Low pay has long been a characteristic of the ECEC workforce (BERA-TACTYC, 2017, p.11). In 2019, a nursery manager/owner had an average hourly rate of pay of £13.97, compared to £21.09 for the general workforce in the same occupational grouping in standard occupational classifications (CEEDA, 2019a, p. 38). ECEC practitioners without qualified teacher status had average hourly pay of £8.74, compared to others in the same standard occupational grouping of 'caring, leisure and other services' of £9.43 per hour (CEEDA, 2019a, p.38).

There have been few financial incentives for staff to improve their qualifications, less so since the end of the Graduate Leader Fund. Those qualified to level 3 earn 15% more than those with level 2 or below; those with level 6 earn only 10% more than levels 4 and 5 (Bonetti, 2018, p.15). 'For comparison, the average graduate premium in the UK, i.e. the wage difference between graduates and school-leavers, is estimated to be around 35 per cent,' (Bonetti, 2018, p.15).

1.1.5 Indices of multiple deprivation (IMD) and early childhood education and care settings

In England, there are more entitlement funded ECEC providers in advantaged areas than in areas of disadvantage. Figure 1.1 below, from the National Audit Office (NAO) report on *Supporting disadvantaged families through free early education and childcare in England* (2020, p.36) shows that in 2019, children in deprived areas were more likely to be at maintained nursery and state primary schools than those in less deprived areas, and less likely to be at private and voluntary providers (NAO,, 2020, p.34). There has also been more turnover of providers in disadvantaged areas than in less disadvantaged areas (NAO, 2020, p.34).

Number of entitlement-funded early years providers by deprivation, January 2019

There are more entitlement-funded providers in advantaged areas than in deprived areas

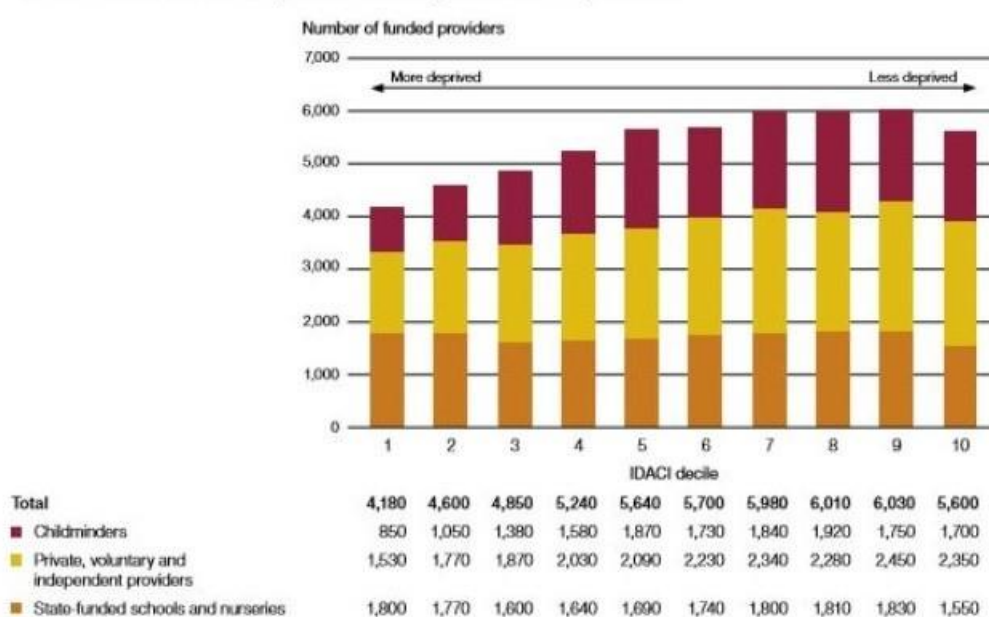


Figure 1.1 Entitlement funded early years providers by deprivation in England, 2019. (NAO, 2020, p.36.).

1.2 Previous research into workforce and professional development in Montessori settings

A limited amount of research is available specifically about the workforce and professional development of staff in Montessori early childhood education and care settings in England. A census by Montessori Schools Association (MSA) (2013) with 177 respondents found that the number of Montessori qualified staff increased to 46% in 2013 from 42% in 2009. Most of the staff members had a Level 3 or 4 qualification with only a few without qualifications, many of whom were currently undergoing training. A considerable number of staff members also had Level 5 or 6 qualifications. Of the settings that responded to the survey, 8% had a PGCE and 11% had EYPS. Some staff were reported as having other qualifications, including graduate/higher level qualifications such as Masters, BA, BEd.

The percentage of male staff was reported as 4% of total full-time staff employed (MSA, 2013).

Findings from the 2013 MSA survey reported that 91% of Montessori settings participating in the study achieved Outstanding or Good Ofsted ratings at their last inspection. As another potential indicator of quality, 47% of respondent settings had gained Montessori accreditation. For all schools who were part of the Montessori Schools Association, 22% had achieved accreditation in 2013.

Other Montessori research commissioned and funded by MSN does not pertain to workforce or professional development issues and so is not reviewed here (Sammons and Eliot 2003; Belton and Lane, 2013).

2. Methodology

2.1 Ethical considerations

The research protocol including data collection tool (online survey) for this research project, as submitted for ethics review, was given a favourable opinion on behalf of The Open University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) on 07/11/2019. The Open University's research ethics review procedures are fully compliant with the majority of research council, professional organisations and grant awarding bodies' research ethics guidelines.

2.2 Development of the online survey and pilot phase

The OU research team developed an online survey to investigate the workforce characteristics and qualifications of staff across Montessori early childhood settings in England. The survey questions were developed, drafted and agreed in collaboration with MSN. The survey questions were developed to be cognisant of previous published national surveys of ECEC workforce composition and qualifications. The survey was designed to provide a detailed overview of the Montessori workforce composition in England including age, gender, ethnicity, qualification levels and type and years of experience plus training and development needs/courses attended.

The survey* was administered through the online survey tool, Qualtrics, which produced a weblink that respondents needed to click on should they wish to anonymously participate. The online survey included all relevant, required information about the study and consent forms to ensure that settings were free to choose whether to participate and to ensure that they have given their full informed consent. *The full set of survey questions is available to view in Appendix 1.

This weblink was sent to MSN, so that they were able to share information about the study to their networks. This weblink and information about how to participate was initially sent to five Montessori settings as a pilot study. Two settings completed the pilot survey and feedback was given with regards to how long the survey took, and any areas which needed amendment or clarification. A few minor amendments were made to the survey at this time, in advance of the full data collection phase.

2.3 Data collection: main phase

MSN sent out information about the research study and the associated online survey weblink to 350 Montessori settings in England on behalf of the OU research team. This targeted population included different types of Montessori settings (day nurseries, preschools, childminders), with different geographic and demographic characteristics. All Montessori settings that are members of the Montessori Schools Association (MSA) formed the target group for the study survey. They were identified by the funding body, MSN, through their MSA membership database.

Several reminders to complete the survey were sent out by MSN to encourage participation. Research (Van Mol, 2017) has shown that reminders do help boost response rates to online surveys. Data were collected between February – June 2020. The survey collection phase was extended due to Covid-19. It should be noted that settings were instructed to respond to the survey with information about their setting *as of February 2020* (i.e. before Covid-19 restrictions came into force).

In total, 77 settings fully or partially completed the online survey. This corresponds to a response rate of 22%. Clearly the higher the response rate, the more representative the findings are, though the context of the data collection (i.e. before, during and just after the onset of strict Covid-19 restrictions) must be acknowledged as this would have undoubtedly impacted on the number of responses collected. That said, 22% is a respectable response rate for an online survey, and studies have shown (e.g. Shih & Fan, 2009) that response rates to online surveys can be expected to be lower than postal based surveys. Postal based survey were not used in this study due to the huge expense that sending out postal surveys would have involved in terms of labour, printing and postal costs, in addition to the significant additional time and expense that manually inputting all response data would have meant. A recent report published (IPSOS Mori, 2018) has shown that when newly qualified teachers (NQT) were surveyed using an online survey, responses rates (during 2013,14,15) were 24% or lower, which is actually very similar to that found in this present study.

2.3 Sample settings

All settings who responded to the main survey were located in England. The majority of the settings who took part in this survey research were Nursery schools (46%) or Day nurseries (24%), with an average of 8 paid staff at each setting. All settings (who replied to this particular question) were rated as OFSTED Grade 1 or Grade 2.

2.4 Description of variables and analytical procedure

Each setting was asked to complete both fixed answer and open-ended questions which provided the opportunity to categorise the data according to fixed categories and to explore the views and experiences of each setting that responded in more depth. By collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, responses from settings have been able to be analysed using both descriptive statistics (using SPSS 26) and thematic analysis. Frequency data provided by settings were collated to enable frequencies and percentages to be presented in Tables and Charts so give an overall picture of the Montessori workforce as described in the settings that took part.

Thematic analysis of qualitative data was undertaken using NVivo 12 Plus, qualitative data analysis computer software from QSR International, which provides tools for storing and coding qualitative data. Analysis using NVivo, seeking recurrent themes and pivotal information, was undertaken on responses to survey questions 7a, 7b, 8a, 8b, 12 and 13. Themes were derived from close reading of response transcriptions imported into NVivo from the Qualtrics survey data, paying attention to similar words, phrases or meanings according to relevance to the research aims and objectives. References (units of meaning: a word, a set of words or a paragraph) were allocated to codes, which were gradually refined and combined to create a set of themes and sub-codes¹. As well as the focus on research objectives, attention was paid to findings from the literature search of previously published research on workforce and professional development (sections 1.2 and 1.3 above) to seek out pertinent words or phrases and to check for resonance. In the findings section, sections 3.3.1, 3.3.2, 3.3.3, 3.3.4, 3.4.1, 3.4.2, themes and sub-codes for qualitative data are presented in terms of numbers of references² per theme or sub-code and the percentage of coverage³. Indicative quotations from participants' responses are used to convey the range of the content of themes and sub-codes, to provide more nuanced understanding and to foreground participant voices, each followed by the participant's number (e.g. P3).

3. Findings

The findings of the workforce survey* are presented below in the following parts pertinent to the Montessori workforce:

- 3.1 Demographics
- 3.2 Qualifications
- 3.3 Professional development and training
- 3.4 Employment issues
- 3.5 Settings information

*A note on sample size; the final dataset analysed includes full and partial responses from 77 settings. Some of the demographic data was collected later in the survey, and therefore this part (for some settings) has not been fully completed. For example, Table 3.1 shows data from just 48

¹ In NVivo software, themes and sub-codes are referred to as nodes, some of which may be subsidiary nodes.

² In NVivo qualitative analysis, the number of references refers to the number of selected excerpts that were coded at that node.

³ In NVivo qualitative analysis, coverage percentage indicates how much of the source content is coded at this node. This is calculated as a percentage of characters coded at the node.

settings (denoted by N = 48 in Table title). The data have been presented in a number of ways, total staff/percentage of staff and total number of settings, to present a more rounded view of the resulting data.

The responses from these 77 settings have been retained, even where there are gaps in the dataset, as all settings provided very useful information that could be collated, and then quantified and analysed. Additionally, many settings provided important qualitative data that could be further analysed to identify themes and patterns.

3.1 Demographics of the workforce

3.1.1 Age ranges of staff

Table 3.1 Number of staff in each age group, by number of settings (settings N = 48).

| Staff age | Total staff | % | Number of staff at each setting | | | | | | | | | | | | Total settings | % |
|-----------------|-------------|------|---------------------------------|----|----|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----------------|---|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 12 | 20 | | | |
| 16-18 years | 5 | 1.3 | 5 | | | | | | | | | | | 5 | 10.4 | |
| 18.1 - 25 years | 34 | 8.6 | 13 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | 20 | 41.7 | |
| 25.1 - 40 years | 162 | 40.9 | 9 | 6 | 8 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 40 | 83.3 | |
| 40.1 - 55 years | 142 | 35.9 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 2 | | 1 | | | 42 | 91.7 | |
| 55.1 65 years | 41 | 10.4 | 16 | 7 | 1 | 2 | | | | | | | | 26 | 54.2 | |
| 65+ years | 12 | 3.0 | 4 | 4 | | | | | | | | | | 8 | 16.7 | |
| Total | 396 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Table 3.1 shows age groups of staff, by number of settings. In Table 3.1 The *Total staff* column represents the total number of staff at each group. For example; four settings recorded one member of staff aged 65+ and four settings recorded two members of staff aged 65+ resulting in a total of 12 members of staff aged 65+ calculated as the total for that age group.

The results in Table 3.1 demonstrate that the majority of staff are in the 25.1 – 40 years category (40.9% of staff reported on in this study), but also a large proportion of staff are also in the 40.1- 55 years category (35.9% of staff). Table 3.1 also shows that only 10.4% of settings (5 settings) had staff who were aged 16-18, whereas 42 of the 48 settings (91.7%) had staff with at least one staff member aged 40.1 to 55 years. Figure 3.1 shows the proportion of staff in each age range.

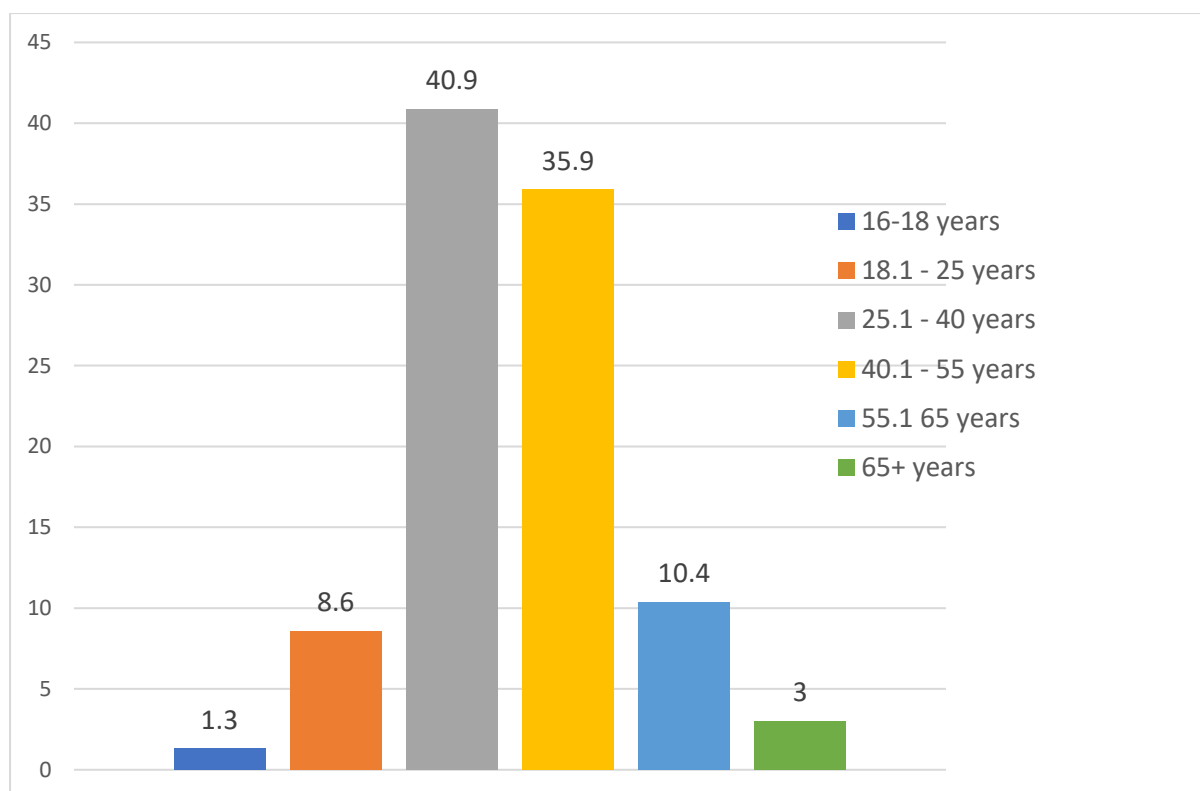


Figure 3.1 Age ranges of staff.

3.1.2 Gender

Table 3.2 Gender of staff, by number of settings (settings N = 47).

| *Staff gender | Total staff | % | Number of staff recorded in each gender category | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Total settings | % |
|------------------|----------------|------|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-------------------|-----|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 15 | 16 | 19 | 24 | | |
| M | 19 | 4.5 | 12 | 2 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 15 | 32 |
| F | 399 | 95.0 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 47 | 100 |
| O | 2 | 0.5 | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| Total | 420 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

*M = Male, F = Female, O = Other.

Table 3.2 shows gender of staff, by number of settings. The *Total staff* column represents the total number of staff of each gender recorded. For example, 12 settings reported one male at their setting and one setting reported 24 female members of staff.

The results in Table 3.2 demonstrate that the vast majority of staff are female (95% of staff numbers reported on in this study).

Table 3.2 also demonstrates that all 47 settings who answered this question had female staff members, whereas 15 of the 47 settings who participated on this question had at least one male staff member (32% of settings).

3.1.3 Ethnicity and Nationality

Table 3.3 Ethnicity of staff*, by number of settings (settings N = 45).

| | | | Number of staff recorded | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------|------|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----------------|------|--|--|
| Staff ethnicity | Total staff | % | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 14 | 20 | Total settings | % | | |
| White | 295 | 89.1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| White British | 244 | | 9 | 2 | 6 | 5 | 4 | | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 44 | 97.8 | | |
| White Irish | 5 | | 5 | | | | | | | | | | | | 5 | 11.1 | | |
| White Other | 46 | | 8 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | 20 | 44.4 | | |
| Multiple Groups | 8 | 2.4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| White/Black African | 3 | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 4.4 | | |
| White Asian | 2 | | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 4.4 | | |
| Mixed Other | 3 | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 4.4 | | |
| Asian/Asian British | 23 | 6.9 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Indian | 9 | | 3 | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | | | | 5 | 11.1 | | |
| Pakistani | 5 | | 2 | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | 3 | 6.7 | | |
| Chinese | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 2.2 | | |
| Asian Other | 8 | | 6 | 1 | | | | | | | 1 | | | | 8 | 17.8 | | |
| Black/African/Caribbean | 5 | 1.5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| African | 3 | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | 2 | 4.4 | | |
| Caribbean | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 2.2 | | |
| Other African/Caribbean | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 2.2 | | |
| Total | 331 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

*Ethnic categories recorded as per guidance provided by The Race Disparity Unit (2020).

Table 3.3 and Figure 3.2 show that the majority of staff at the settings who participated were recorded as White (89.1%); 6.9% Asian/Asian British; 2.4% Mixed/Multiple ethnicity and 1.5% Black/African/Caribbean.

These statistics reflect that nearly 9 in every 10 Montessori staff members are White.

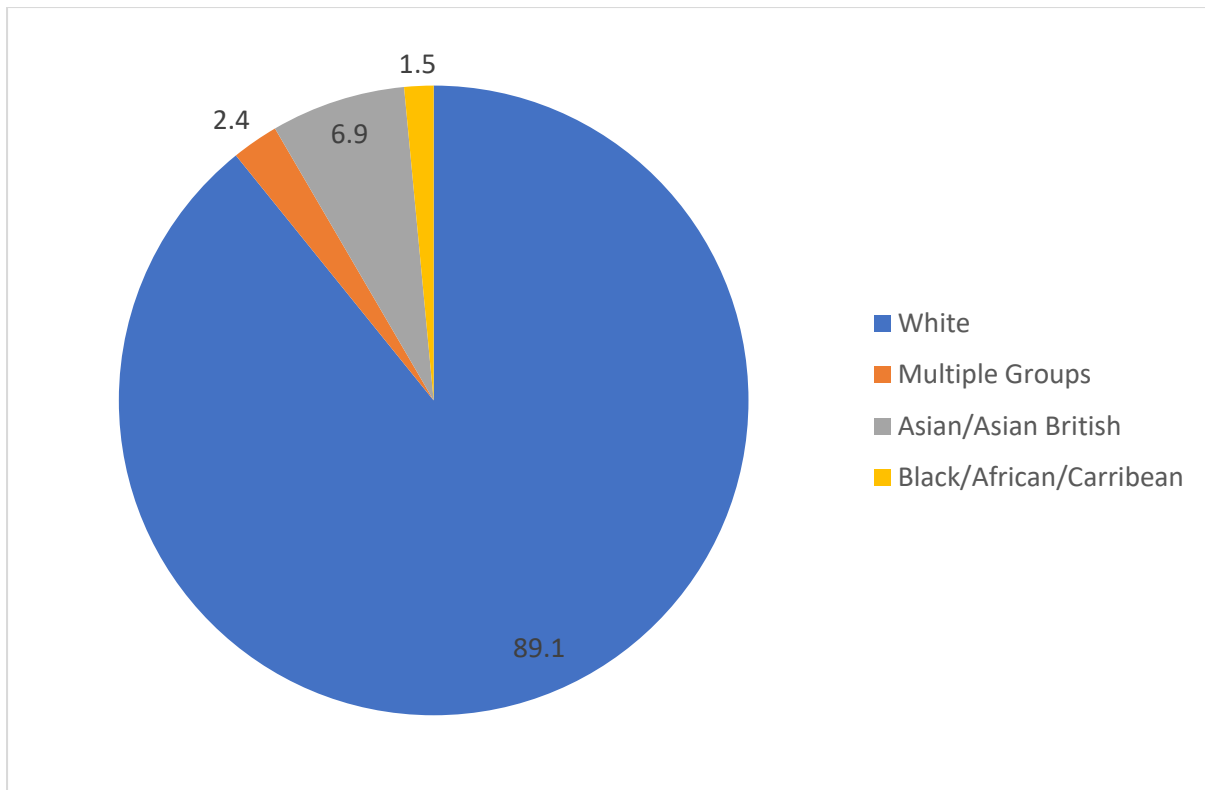


Figure 3.2 Pie chart displaying % Staff Ethnicity (settings N = 45).

Table 3.4 Number of staff who identify as Non-UK nationals outside EU (settings N = 48).

| Number of staff at each setting | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|----------------|
| Total staff | 1 | 2 | 4 | Total settings |
| 15 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 8 |

From Table 3.4 it can be seen that 15 members of staff across 8 settings identify as a Non-UK national outside of the EU. At this point in the survey 48 settings were engaged in responding, so this corresponds to approximately 16.7% of settings having at least one member of staff who identifies as a Non-UK national. Out of the approximate 400 staff this refers to in these 48 settings – this means that in this sample, 3.8% of Montessori staff identify as Non-UK nationals outside EU.

Table 3.5 Number of staff who identify as EU Nationals outside the UK (settings N = 48).

| Number of staff at each setting | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|----|---|---|----|----------------|
| Total staff | 1 | 2 | 3 | 10 | Total settings |
| 33 | 10 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 17 |

It is possible to see from Table 3.5 that 33 members of staff across 17 settings identify as EU nationals outside of the UK. At this point in the survey 48 settings were engaged in responding, so this corresponds to approximately 35.4% of settings having a least one member of staff who identified as an EU national outside the UK. Out of the approximate 400 staff this refers to in these 48 settings, this means that in this sample, 8.3% of Montessori staff identify as EU nationals outside of the UK.

Settings were asked if any staff had disclosed a disability. Of the 42 settings who responded to this question, 10 settings (23.8%), said 'Yes a member of staff had disclosed a disability'. All these, 10 settings reported just one staff member at their setting who had disclosed a disability.

3.2 Qualifications of the workforce

3.2.1 Highest Qualification of staff

Settings were asked what the highest qualification of staff members working directly with children in the following ages groups were (birth to 2, 2.1-3 and 3.1 to 4+ years).

Table 3.6 Highest qualification of staff at each setting, split by child age groups (settings N = 45).

| | Children 0 to 2 years | % | Children 2.1 to 3 years | % | Children 3.1 to 4+ years | % |
|--------------|----------------------------------|----------|------------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Level 2 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 2.3 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Level 3 | 5 | 22.7 | 5 | 11.6 | 1 | 2.2 |
| Level 4 | 5 | 22.7 | 8 | 18.6 | 9 | 20.0 |
| Level 5 | 4 | 18.2 | 5 | 11.6 | 5 | 11.1 |
| Level 6 | 2 | 9.1 | 5 | 11.6 | 6 | 13.3 |
| EYTS* | 2 | 9.1 | 7 | 16.3 | 8 | 17.8 |
| QTS/PGCE | 2 | 9.1 | 8 | 18.6 | 10 | 22.2 |
| Level 7 | 1 | 4.5 | 5 | 11.6 | 6 | 13.3 |
| Level 8 | 1 | 4.5 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Total | 22 | | 43 | | 45 | |

* Early Years Teacher Status/Early Years Professional Status

From Table 3.6 and Figure 3.3 it is possible to see that there are some differences in the deployment of staff working with children across different age groups. In particular, Figure 3.3 indicates that there are often more highly qualified staff deployed to work with children aged 3.1-4 when compared to staff working with children aged up to 2 years old.

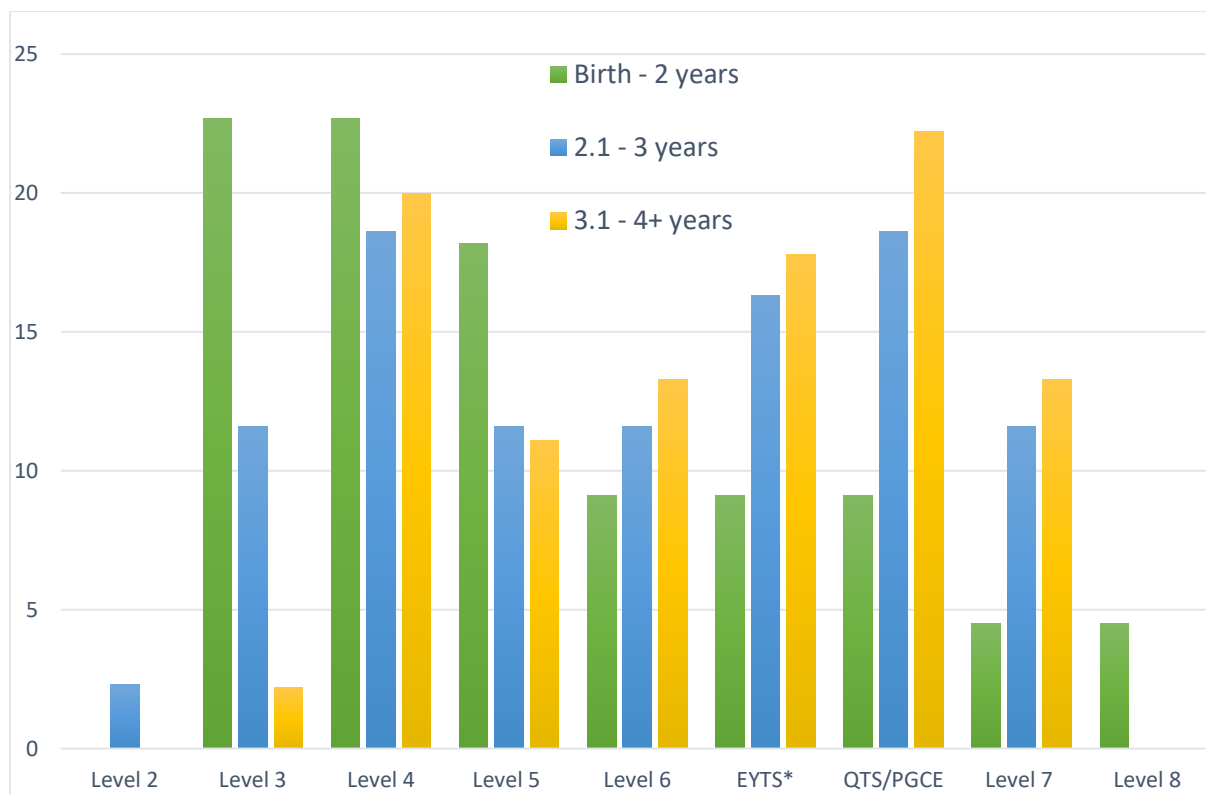


Figure 3.3 Highest qualification of staff deployed, by child age group.

3.2.2 Qualifications currently held and working towards

Table 3.7 The early childhood qualifications staff members have (settings N = 72).

| | Total staff | % | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 17 | Total settings | % |
|--------------|--------------------|--------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|-------------|
| No ECEC | 78 | 13.3 | 21 | 7 | 5 | 3 | | | 1 | | 1 | | | | 38 | 52.8 |
| Level 2 | 36 | 6.1 | 17 | 4 | 1 | 2 | | | | | | | | | 24 | 33.3 |
| Level 3 | 169 | 28.8 | 18 | 15 | 13 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 57 | 79.2 |
| Level 4 | 143 | 24.4 | 17 | 17 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | 54 | 75.0 |
| Level 5 | 32 | 5.5 | 23 | 3 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | 27 | 37.5 |
| Level 6 | 51 | 8.7 | 18 | 7 | 4 | | | | 1 | | | | | | 30 | 41.7 |
| EYTS | 37 | 6.3 | 25 | 6 | | | | | | | | | | | 31 | 43.1 |
| QTS/PGCE | 33 | 5.6 | 15 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | | | | | | | 20 | 27.8 |
| Level 7 | 7 | 1.2 | 7 | | | | | | | | | | | | 7 | 9.7 |
| Level 8 | 1 | 0.2 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1.4 |
| Total | 587 | 100.0 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Table 3.7 and Figure 3.4 show the early childhood qualifications staff currently hold.

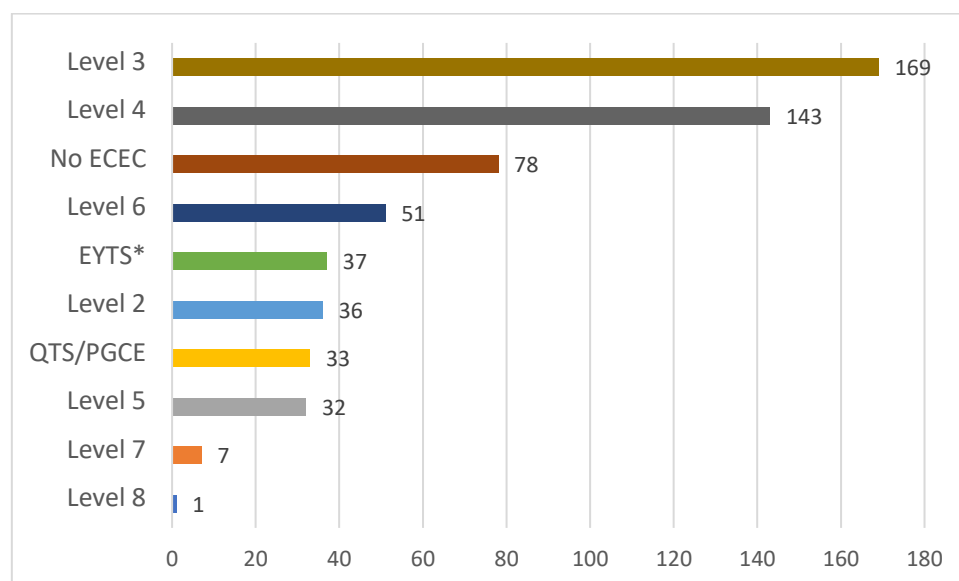


Figure 3.4 The early childhood qualifications staff have (in descending order).

It is possible to see from Table 3.7 and Figure 3.4 that most staff hold Level 3 and Level 4 early childhood qualifications. Table 3.8 and Figure 3.5 show the early childhood qualifications staff are currently working towards.

Table 3.8 The childhood qualifications staff members are working towards (settings N = 72).

| | Total staff | % | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | Total settings | % |
|--------------|------------------------|--------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---------------------------|-------------|
| Level 2 | 12 | 16.4 | 2 | 2 | | | | 1 | 5 | 6.9 |
| Level 3 | 26 | 35.6 | 15 | 4 | 1 | | | | 20 | 27.8 |
| Level 4 | 17 | 23.3 | 13 | 2 | | | | | 15 | 20.8 |
| Level 5 | 6 | 8.2 | 3 | | 1 | | | | 4 | 5.6 |
| Level 6 | 5 | 6.8 | 5 | | | | | | 5 | 6.9 |
| EYTS* | 2 | 2.7 | 2 | | | | | | 2 | 2.8 |
| QTS/PGCE | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | | | | | | 0 | 0.0 |
| Level 7 | 3 | 4.1 | 1 | 1 | | | | | 2 | 2.8 |
| Level 8 | 2 | 2.7 | 2 | | | | | | 2 | 2.8 |
| Total | 73 | 100.0 | | | | | | | | |

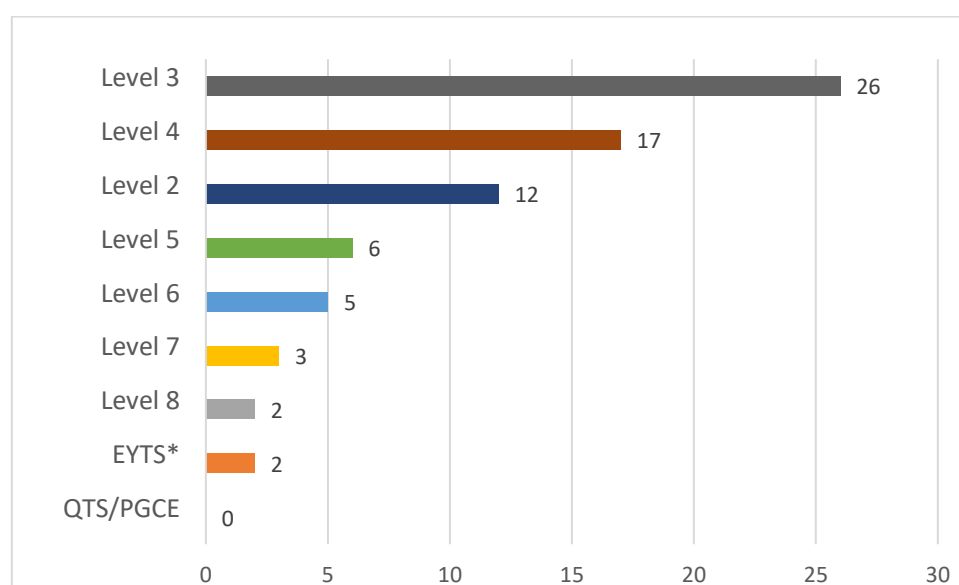


Figure 3.5 The early childhood qualifications staff are working towards (in descending order).

Table 3.8 shows that most staff are working towards Level 3 qualifications (26 out of 73 staff 35.6% of those studying). More broadly, just over half (52%) of staff (of those reported as studying) were working towards Level 2 or Level 3 qualification. The remaining 48% of these staff were studying for qualifications at Level 4 – Level 8.

Table 3.9 and Figure 3.6 demonstrate that the most commonly held Montessori qualification is the MCI Diploma Level 4 (63.4% of staff reported in this study).

Table 3.9 The Montessori qualifications staff members currently hold (settings N = 72).

| | Total staff | % | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 17 | Total settings | % |
|------------------------|------------------------|--------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|---------------------------|----------|
| MCI Diploma Level 3 | 38 | 17.6 | 14 | 2 | 1 | | | | | | 1 | 18 | 25.0 |
| MCI Diploma Level 4 | 137 | 63.4 | 16 | 12 | 11 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 | | 50 | 69.4 |
| MCI Cert HE Level 4 | 4 | 1.9 | 4 | | | | | | | | | 4 | 5.6 |
| MM AMI Diploma Level 4 | 7 | 3.2 | 5 | 1 | | | | | | | | 6 | 8.3 |
| MCI Fd* Degree Level 5 | 12 | 5.6 | 12 | | | | | | | | | 12 | 16.7 |
| MCI BA Hons Level 6 | 5 | 2.3 | 5 | | | | | | | | | 5 | 6.9 |
| EYS/MCI IMP** | 13 | 6.0 | 6 | 2 | 1 | | | | | | | 9 | 12.5 |
| Total | 216 | 100.0 | | | | | | | | | | | |

*Foundation **Early Years Status MCI Integrating Montessori Practice

Overall, 17 settings included information in the 'Other' category which included:

- MCI Level 2 assistants' certificate
- Foundation certificate in Montessori Practice
- International Diploma in Montessori Education Kent and Sussex Montessori Centre Level 4
- NAMC Level 4 Diploma
- MMI Diploma Level 4
- Diploma in Early Childhood
- Diploma in Montessori Pedagogy
- FETAC Level 6

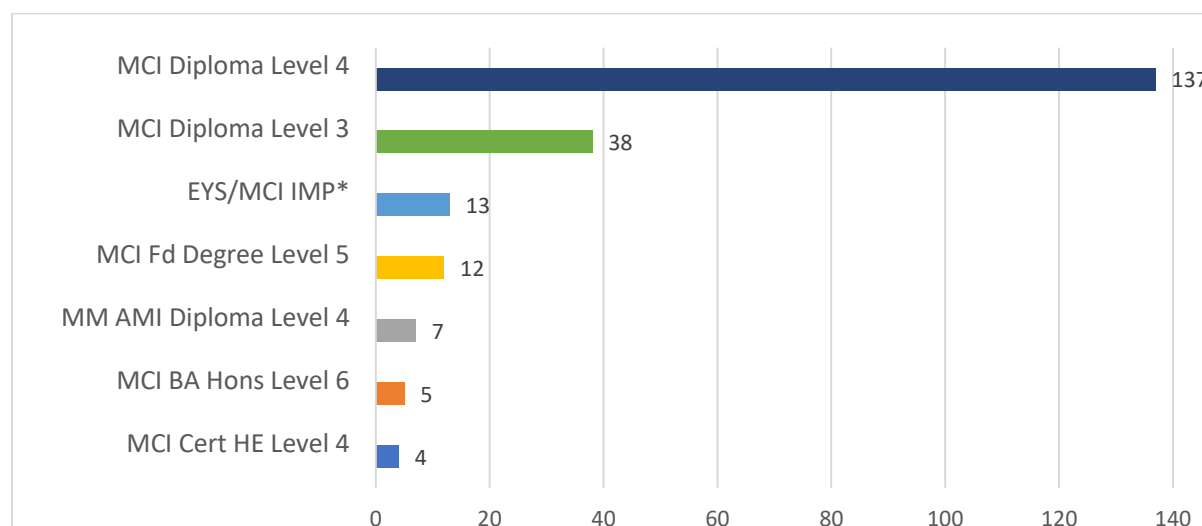


Figure 3.6 The Montessori qualifications staff members currently hold (in descending order).

Table 3.10 and Figure 3.7 demonstrate that the most commonly held Montessori qualification staff are working towards is MCI Diploma Level 4 (66.7% of staff reported in this study to be working towards a Montessori qualification).

Table 3.10 The Montessori qualifications staff members currently working towards (settings N = 72).

| | Total staff | % | 1 | 2 | 3 | Total settings | % |
|------------------------|------------------------|--------------|----------|----------|----------|---------------------------|----------|
| MCI Diploma Level 3 | 3 | 16.7 | 1 | 2 | | 3 | 4.2 |
| MCI Diploma Level 4 | 12 | 66.7 | 10 | 1 | | 11 | 15.3 |
| MCI Cert HE Level 4 | 0 | 0.0 | | | | 0 | 0.0 |
| MM AMI Diploma Level 4 | 0 | 0.0 | | | | 0 | 0.0 |
| MCI Fd* Degree Level 5 | 0 | 0.0 | | | | 0 | 0.0 |
| MCI BA Hons Level 6 | 1 | 5.6 | 1 | | | 2 | 2.8 |
| EYS/MCI IMP** | 2 | 11.1 | | 1 | | 3 | 4.2 |
| Total | 18 | 100.0 | | | | | |

*Foundation **Early Years Status MCI Integrating Montessori Practice

Overall, 8 Settings included information in the 'Other' category which included:

- Early years Degree
- Montessori training from Wendy Compson
- Montessori partnership level 5
- Montessori Diploma in Primary Education.

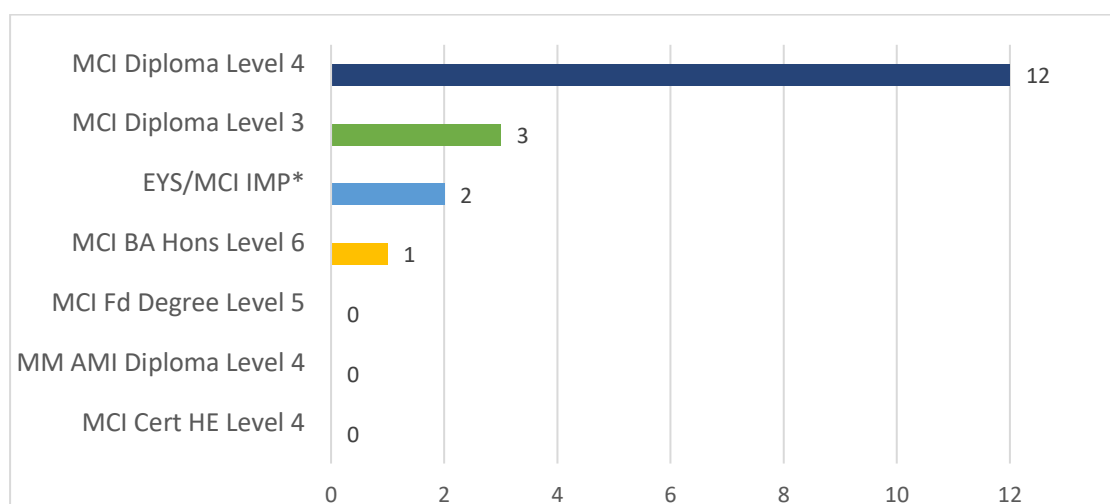


Figure 3.7 The Montessori qualifications staff members currently working towards (in descending order).

3.3 Professional development and training

Settings were asked specifically about three types of courses 1) First Aid, 2) Safeguarding and 3) Food safety (settings N = 56). All external courses were reported as paid for by Management.

Table 3.11 Mandatory courses staff have taken within the last 2 years.

| | Mean length course (days) | Mean number staff participating | % External trainers |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Paediatric First Aid | 1.93 | 6.69 | 95% |
| Safeguarding | 1.36 | 5.86 | 95% |
| CIEH Food safety | 1.07 | 4.84 | 92% |

Table 3.11 shows the mean (average) length of course, mean number of staff participating and the proportion of those courses provided by external trainers. First Aid courses were on average two days long, Safeguarding a day and half and Food Safety approximately 1 day, with on average 4 – 7 staff members taking part per setting. All external courses were reported as paid for by Management, and the vast majority of courses were provided for externally.

This section of the survey also asked about additional Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses staff had engaged in over the last two years.



Figure 3.8 Additional CPD courses staff have taken over the last 2 years (see Appendix 2 for Frequencies). Words that are larger have been mentioned more times.

As can be seen in Figure 3.8, the majority of CPD courses staff have taken over the last 2 years are related to **Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND)**. **Leadership and Management, Forest School**, and courses around developing and supporting **Communication and Language** were also mentioned by many of the settings.

3.3.1 Current challenges in staff training

Participants were asked to report on the current challenges they faced regarding staff training (Q7a). Their responses were coded to the following most frequently occurring themes (Figure 3.9): **Costs & funding** (39 refs⁴, 38.6%⁵); **Time** (23 refs, 28.3%); **Demand and supply** issues (18 refs, 27.6%); **Inhouse upskilling** (4 refs, 12.2%); and **Service threat** (10 refs, 9.2%); whilst some reported **No challenges** (3 refs, 4.8%).

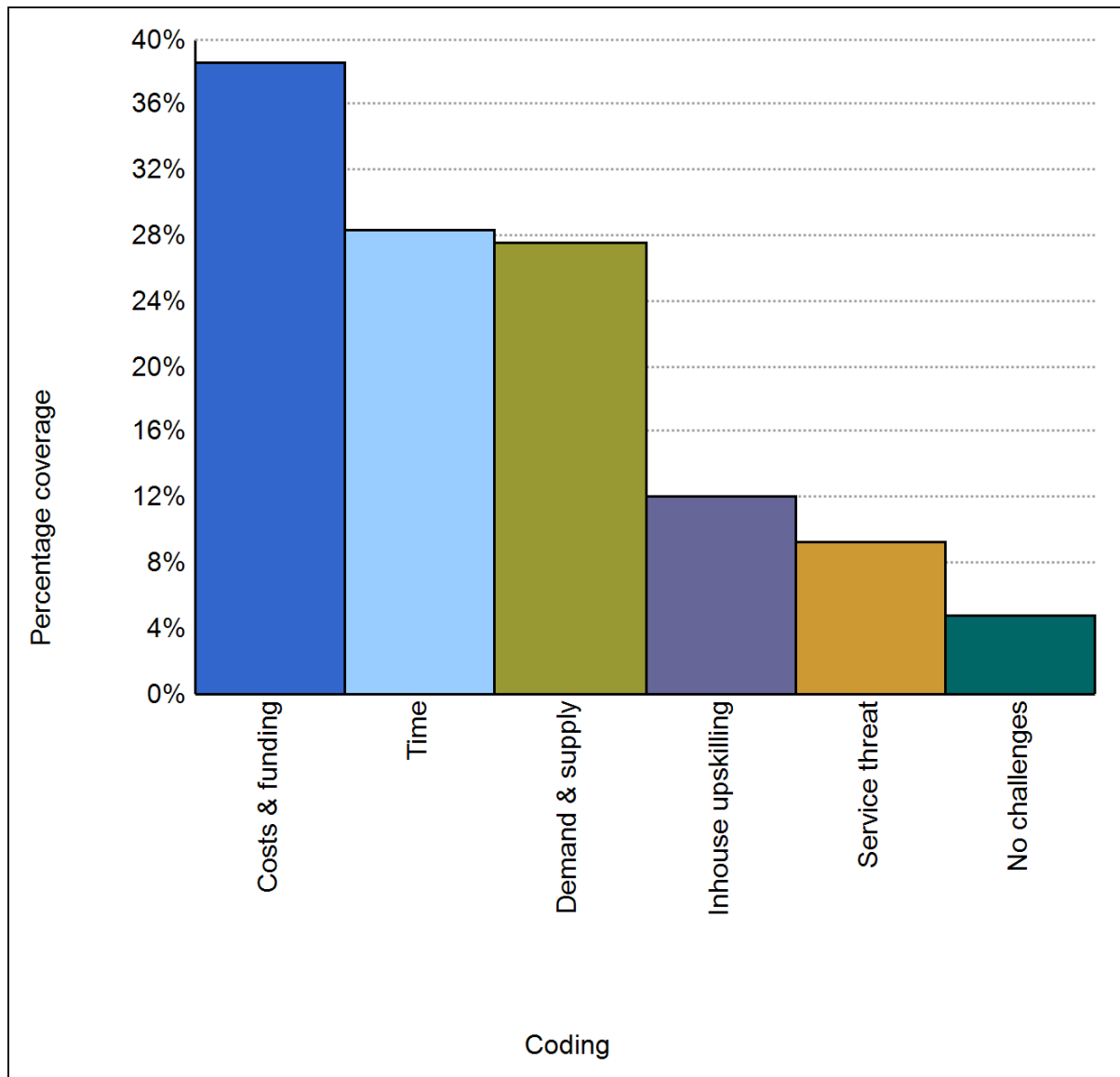


Figure 3.9 Themes attributed to current challenges in staff training (Q7a).

Within the theme of **Costs & funding**, the most frequently occurring sub-codes, beyond simply stating 'costs', were Cost of courses and Staff cover, Table 3.12.

⁴ In NVivo qualitative analysis, the number of references refers to the number of selected excerpts that were coded at that node.

⁵ In NVivo qualitative analysis, coverage percentage indicates how much of the source content is coded at this node. This is calculated as a percentage of characters coded at the node.

Table 3.12 Q13 Settings' plans for recruitment next 12 months – sub-codes under Demand & supply theme.

| <i>Sub-code</i> | Frequency |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| Recruitment plans NO | 22 |
| Recruitment plans YES | 20 |
| Recruitment plans DON'T KNOW | 4 |

Thirty-two references were attributed to the Cost of courses. Participants referred to 'costs increasing' (P12), the difficulty of 'finding the extra money to cover the costs for the courses' (P8), the 'cost for qualification' (P19) and the 'costs of mandatory courses' (P2), while others noted that 'the cost of bespoke training is very high' and so could not be used very often (P16). In general, it was acknowledged that there was a lack of provision in the early years funding system for in-service training (P20).

The training cost is not recognised as essential expense and therefore not possible with the current hourly funded children at £4.90 in the south east. (P42)

It was also noted how changes to the landscape of provision had affected costs in recent years, 'It used to be that our LA would provide courses for free' (P24).

However, the challenges to staff training and professional development went beyond the costs of the courses themselves. As P16 put it, it is a matter of 'Cost to the setting for both the course and for covering the staff absent during working hours' (P16). Indeed, the second most frequently occurring sub-code within the theme of costs & funding (17 references) was that of staff cover. 'Even if courses are free, staff time still needs to be covered so there is still a cost' (P7). Not only was it difficult for settings to pay the costs of staff cover, in essence doubling staff costs for those hours, but it was also a problem for some settings to find staff available to cover, 'Finding bank/cover staff to release core staff members to attend training during working hours' (P16); 'Being short in staff sometimes does not help the chance to attend training courses' (P45).

As we are a small setting it is not possible to send a member of staff of on training and still operate. We would have to close the setting for the day thus parents would not have childcare. (P9).

Time was the second most frequently occurring theme under the challenges to staff training. The most frequently occurring sub-codes, beyond simply stating 'Time', were Staff time (6 references, 11%) and Timing of courses (5 references, 8.6%). Participants mentioned the demands on staff members' time when they were already working long hours and needed to have their off-duty time protected (P6). Others mentioned relying on staff to do online training during their own time outside of work (P7), given the staffing challenges, 'which is why we now train online and in staff's own time' (P21), while others complained that too few online courses were available for staff to do in their own time (P56). However, the demands on staff and family life were acknowledged, 'Training can be very time consuming and if they cannot get childcare for an evening course, they cannot attend any training. I give them a choice of day, evenings or Saturdays.' (P44). In part, it was felt that this also related to the timing of available courses. 'Training courses are only available during

working hours, which impacts ratios' (P73). Others referred to the demands of sole working as a childminder (P31).

Demand & supply was a prominent theme in the challenges to staff training. Within this theme, references were made to Access to courses (7 refs, 23%) and Lack of access to Montessori training or staff (4 refs, 1.3%). Participants noted that fewer courses were available locally, courses that used to be provided free by the local authority (P24, P45), and competition for courses was high, '... there are fewer courses which means we have to wait a long time to get booked as everyone else in the area is applying for the same courses' (P12). Courses were not available in convenient locations, 'lack of courses available in close proximity to setting making travel difficult for those whom do not drive (awful locations)', (P16). For this reason, others (P17, P57) noted a preference for online training, which was felt to be more accessible. However, others noted what they saw as the shortcomings of online training, 'There can be an over reliance on e-learning. I feel that participants gain more understanding from face to face/group/cohort training. That said some e-learning we have done has been very useful particularly as we discuss at staff meetings', (P39).

Ensuring and maintaining specialist Montessori training and staffing was noted as a difficulty, sub-code Lack of access to Montessori training or staff. While it was '... very difficult to get Montessori trained staff when a member of staff leaves', (P28), it was also difficult to access Montessori professional development courses. There was perceived to be a

lack of variety of courses available - most Montessori seminar courses seem to be targeted at current students on their Diploma/Certificate/foundation degrees (there used to be a wide range of seminars and CPD courses covering a range of different topics to extend knowledge and practice) (P16).

Participants referred to the ways in which they responded to the challenges of staff training by promoting **In-house upskilling of staff**. Under this theme, one participant mentioned that the setting had employed staff at level 2 and had 'sponsored on Montessori level 3', (P4). Another explained that 'As an MCI trained tutor and lecturer I provide inhouse training. In staff meetings and paid staff days', (P26), while P39 referred to holding discussions of specific online training during staff meetings as a way of increasing understanding. However, not all responses expressed opinions in terms of challenges. One respondent explained the extent of professional development that had been undertaken during recent times, much of which had been paid for or supplemented by management.

We have had way too many CPD, approximately 150 days' worth, to write in here and management paid for all of them. Excluding the Masters courses which are additional hours and paid for privately. One teacher also completed her Mont diploma during this time as well as additional hours and part paid by management. (P40)

This reflected the view of three participants who stated that they were facing **No challenges** regarding staff training.

3.3.2 Current challenges regarding early years qualifications

We asked participants to tell us about the challenges they faced regarding early years qualifications(Q7b). The most frequently occurring themes (Figure 3.10) related primarily to the

codes **Demand & supply** (17 refs, 34.4%); **Costs & Funding** (29 refs, 33%); **Quality of courses or candidates** (8 refs, 19.5%); **Career or promotion opportunities** (6 refs, 14.2%); **Time** (11 refs, 10.2%); **Understanding & recognition of Montessori** (3 refs, 5%). Also referred to, though less frequently, were issues relating to **Qualification entry requirements** (3.7%); **Service threats** (2.8%); and **Qualification levels** (2.3%).

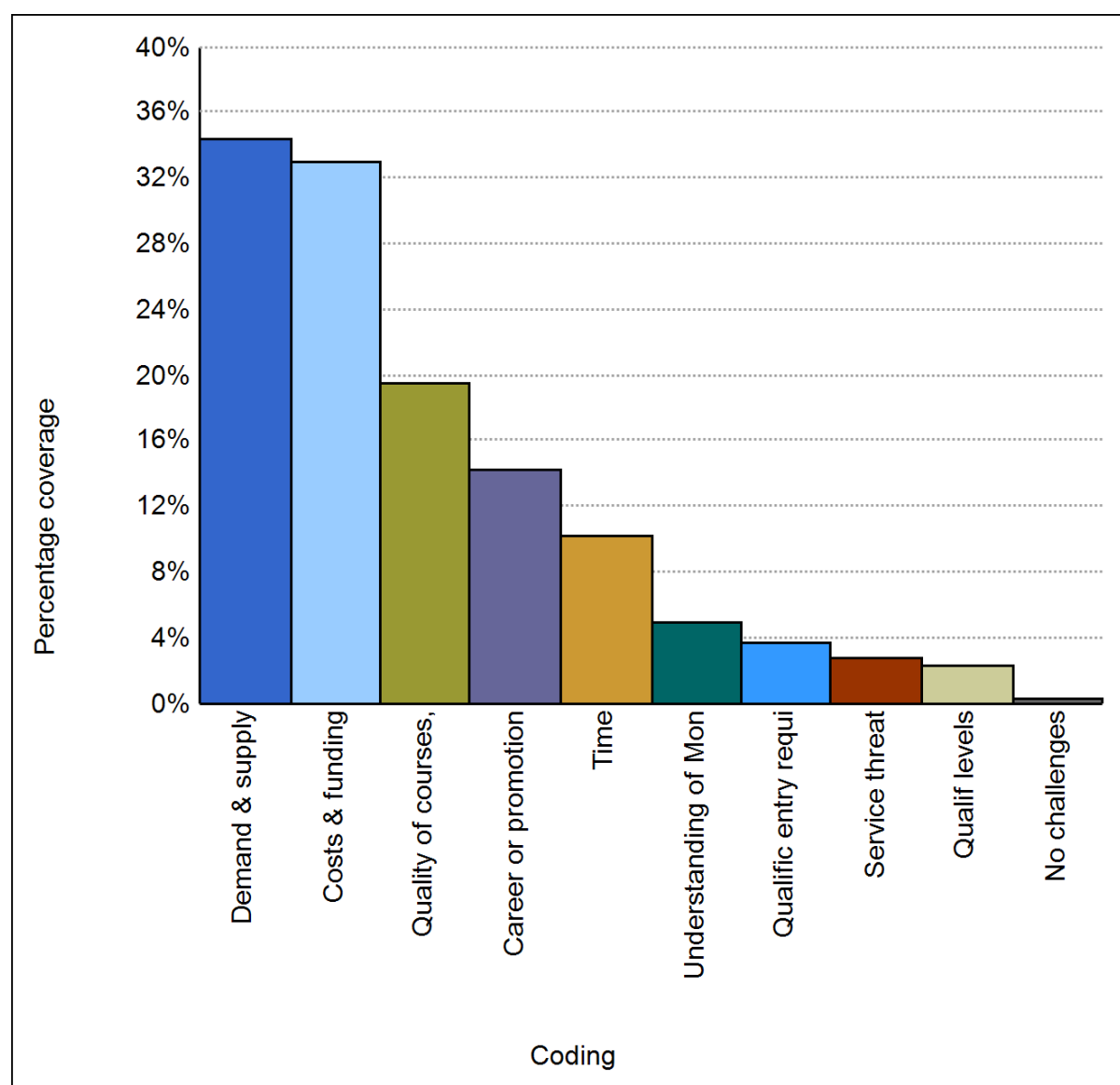


Figure 3.10 Themes attributed to current challenges for early years qualifications (Q7b).

The **Demand and supply** challenges faced regarding qualifications (17 references) included Access to courses (6 references) and Lack of Montessori trained staff or accessible quals (4 references). Access comments stated that access was difficult (P9) because of where the courses take place (P19; P34), with a lack of courses in their local area (P31), especially in a rural location (P33). Participants also reported difficulties in employing Montessori qualified staff. It was ‘very hard to employ Montessori qualified staff outside of London due to the lack of trained staff available’, (P11; P47); ‘It is always difficult to find someone suitably qualified in my area, especially as I try to find Montessori-trained staff’, (P12). It is a challenge if staff did not have ‘a solid foundation in the Montessori Philosophy and Pedagogy’, (P29).

In the **Costs & funding** theme (29 references), participants made general statements regarding the costs of qualifications, e.g. 'due to the cost of the training, nurseries cannot afford to pay for staff to undertake the qualification', (P11), and reported that the financial pressures meant that it was more appealing to train staff on general level 3 courses instead. However, more specific comments included not being able to pay highly qualified staff as much as schoolteachers (P7) and the more attractive possibilities in schools for staff willing to train,

The upfront costs associated with Early Years training, the relative low wage is not appealing to many people - teacher salaries are much more tempting than early years for those looking for education careers, (P16).

As P20 noted, 'The cost of specialist courses is prohibitive. No government funding for Montessori training'. And once trained, meeting salary expectations are a problem, 'Salary expectations are very high - as a small nursery I can't afford "London" wages which is what most applicants expect', (P12).

In the theme **Quality of courses or candidates** (8 references 19.5%), participants referred to the difficulties in deciding which courses were of suitable quality and standing, 'There are too many courses offered by too many providers! It is very hard to keep track on what is full and relevant', (P22). Further, there were challenges in finding 'Good, motivated mentors in placements,' (P45), and some courses were poorly supported with little regard for how far the course led to competent practitioners.

...the quality of the courses on offer - the support offered to distance learners by their tutors leaves a lot to be desired (not applicable to Montessori courses), many early years courses (not necessarily the Montessori courses I hasten to add) seem to approach the course as a box ticking exercise and irrelevant of how competent that person is at working with children, if the box is ticked then that's seems to be good enough for them. (P16)

For others, as staff already had Montessori qualifications, it was difficult to find professional development that added to their practice at an appropriate level, 'all staff in my setting are Montessori qualified so finding courses that bring extra to the practice are often few and far between. Many are pitched at level 2 or 3,' (P41). Yet, even courses at levels 2 and 3 were seen as questionable in terms of consistency, 'The online training of level 2 and 3 of EYFS is inconsistent,' (P42). For some, their experiences were of candidates who had passed courses, but who were not necessarily competent in practice, or who demanded salaries beyond those which funding allowed.

Some courses not fit for purpose and those coming in from Level 3 courses cannot do the work, gained the qualification yet want large salaries based on qualification,' (P59).

People have paper qualifications but cannot do the work, cannot engage with children, present poorly, can't or won't do the paperwork (planning, observations, reports etc),' (P56).

Career or promotion opportunities (6 references, 14.2%) were cited as challenges to early years qualifications. Being unable 'to offer career opportunities on a par with State Schools', (P26) was a difficulty, with the sector seen as an undesirable career choice because of poor pay (P32; P55). The incentives for staff to improve their qualifications were low, 'There is not an increased financial reward i.e. no increased income if early years qualifications are acquired. It would be better to get

another qualification in a different area of expertise and change career path,' (P50). Settings were under pressure to ensure staff were well-trained, but could not afford to pay extra afterwards, 'Constant pressure to reward staff and with minimal income,' (P59).

The challenges facing early years as a career choice were summarised neatly by P44,

Also why would anyone want to come into the early years sector any more, the pay is dreadful, we are undervalued by the Government and even though we desperately want to give our staff more money, we can't. The 30 hrs and the free entitlement has had an impact how on parents view our profession.'

Time (11 references 10.2%) – Beyond the challenge of the extended time taken to achieve qualifications, respondents acknowledged how draining it was for staff who were studying alongside working, 'Time to complete are challenging, 40/50 hr weeks,' (P59). However, settings were supportive where possible, 'Having to study alongside working can be very tiring but we REALLY support staff,' (P6), although this could be difficult, 'particularly if there is no help/support from local County Councils,' (P44).

Challenges were noted regarding qualifications in relation to **Understanding & recognition of Montessori qualifications** (3 references, 5%). Participants referred to the lack of understanding about 'equivalence between Montessori qualifications and mainstream ones by those in the mainstream,' (P36) and 'recognition of Montessori and accessibility as in widening participation,' (P49). It was also noted that there was a lack of financial support for Montessori qualifications

One participant referred to the **Qualification entry requirements** (1 reference, 3.7%) as a challenge. P50 suggested, 'Early Years Teacher status to be open to all, not to have a requirement of Maths, Science and English GCSE's to undertake qualification.'

One participant explained that finding staff with appropriate qualifications was a **Service threat** to Montessori nurseries, 'makes recruitment very difficult, recruitment is a very big issue as a Montessori setting - finding Montessori qualified staff who are committed to maintaining standards,' (P16). In referring to the **Qualification levels** of Montessori staff, another pointed out, 'Our team is very highly qualified, and they are paid better than in most settings. However, their pay is not equal to a schoolteacher,' (P7).

3.3.3 Plans for professional development in next 12 months

Participants told us about their priorities and plans for professional development of their staff for the next 12 months (Q8a). The most prevalent themes (Figure 3.11) included the following: **Update knowledge & practice** (21 refs, 29.5%); **Mandatory training** (17 refs, 19.3%); **Qualification levels** (15 refs, 16%); **Inhouse upskilling** (5 refs, 9%); **Understanding of Montessori** (4 refs, 6%). Other themes in the responses referred to issues of **Demand & supply** (3 refs, 6%); **Staff interests** (3 refs, 4%); **Costs & funding** (1 ref, 3%) and **Quality of courses** (1 ref, 3%).

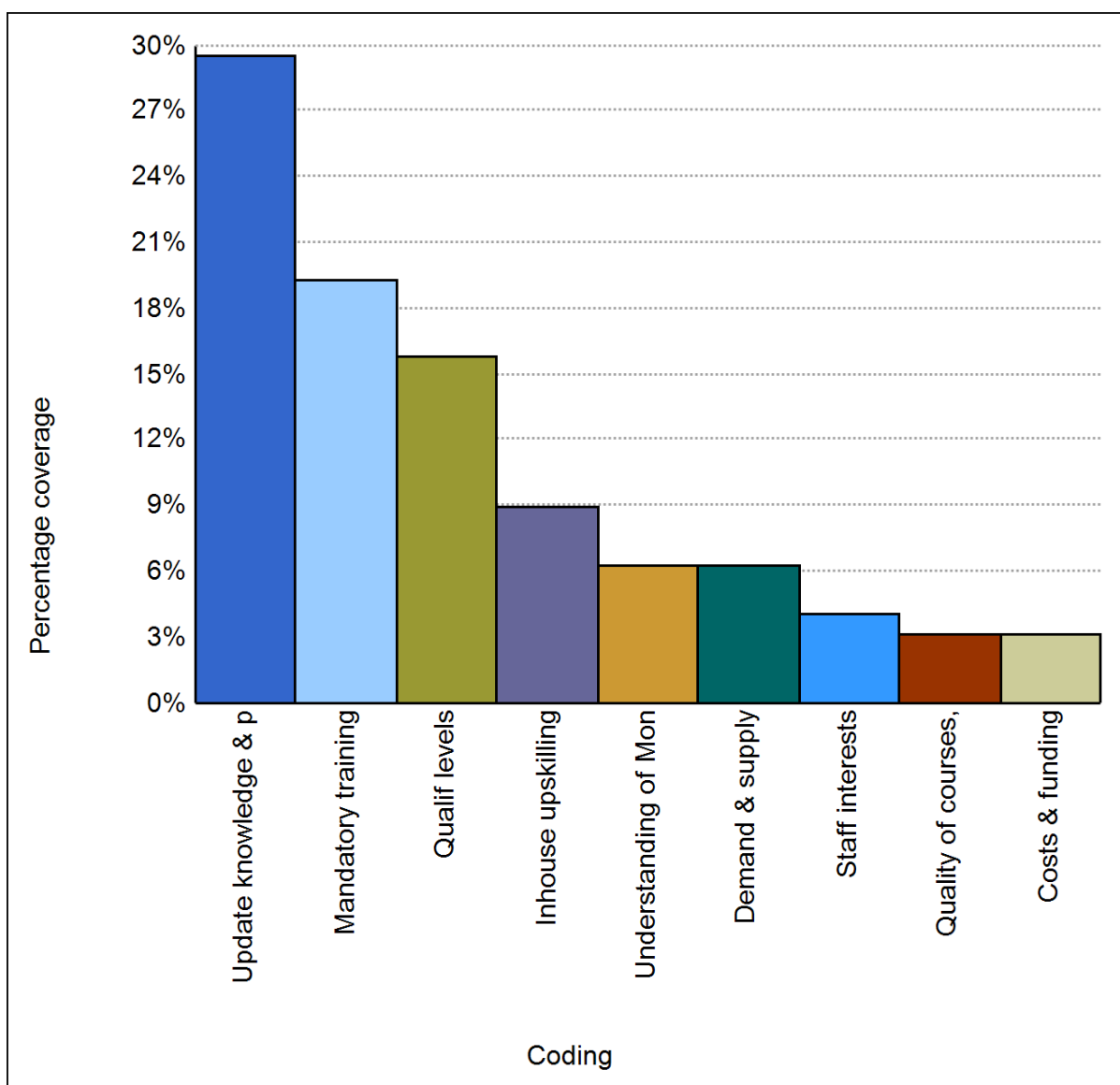


Figure 3.11 Themes attributed to priorities and plans for professional development of staff for the next 12 months (Q8a).

The theme **Update knowledge & practice** included references (21) to a wide range of topics for professional development, itemised in Table 3.13 as sub-codes. As can be seen from the table, the most frequent plans were to seek professional development on Inclusive practice & SEND, Speech & language, and Outdoor learning. Some participants referred in general to updating knowledge, whilst others referred to using online training platforms such as ‘Educare’.

Table 3.13 Q8a Priorities & plans for professional development next 12 months - Sub-codes for Update knowledge & practice theme.

| Sub-codes to Update knowledge & practice theme | Frequency of references in Q8a (%) |
|---|---|
| Inclusive practice & SEND | 4 (2.3) |
| Speech & language | 4 (1.8) |
| Outdoor learning | 3 (2.7%) |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------|
| Mental health & wellbeing | 2 (3.8) |
| Observations & planning | 2 (3.8) |
| Managing behaviour | 1 (0.7) |
| Sustainability training | 1 (2.6) |
| Business knowledge | 1 (0.8) |
| Infection prevention & control | 1 (0.5) |
| Technology | 1 (2) |
| Conferences & exhibitions | 1 (1) |

Mandatory training was also prioritised for the PD plans unsurprisingly (17 references). The following comments give a flavour of participants' responses. 'First aid certificates are due for renewal this year. Also, Food Safety Hygiene, and Safeguarding for some staff members,' (P12). 'Safeguarding for the new member of staff who have not been yet. SENCO trainings for key staff members,' (P15). 'Online courses to ensure all legal requirements are met,' (P32). One participant mentioned the new demands that are placed on settings as requirements change, 'New requirements come out e.g. for all to do FGM and Prevent training online,' (P7).

Increasing **Qualification levels** amongst staff was stated as a goal by several participants (15 references). The comments ranged from 'To get the 2 staff with no qualification trained,' (P19), through to ensuring staff had (additional or higher level) Montessori qualifications 'To have a L4 Montessori qualified member of staff,' (P22), to aiming for graduate level qualification, 'Our focus as a school is Elementary Training. But we do need someone to consider the graduate route too as we have 5- and 6-year olds in our EY class,' (P4). The range of qualification levels aimed for in settings and the desire to upskill staff was summarised neatly in the plans from P49,

One staff member to complete level 4 and complete FD; One staff member to complete FD and go onto BA; One staff member to complete BA and go onto EYPS; Two staff members to complete Montessori level 4; one staff member to complete EYE level 3. (P49)

Inhouse upskilling was part of the plan for professional development in some settings (5 references). While some simply stated they would use 'in-house training', P15 described a rolling programme of internal development,

Webinars and podcast that we share internally and discuss. Internally - we do internal workshops on various topics, such as growth mindset, appropriate use of language, managing behaviour in a loving and kind way, up to date with compliance and legislation. We operate a termly development.

Four references were made to plans for increasing **Understanding of Montessori** amongst staff members, e.g. 'new staff joiners and Montessori training for those without,' (P40); 'would like my level 3 practitioner to study the Montessori course to help her gain a better understanding of the materials and how it helps children to go forward,' (P73).

Regarding **Demand & supply** (3 refs) reference was made to using local authority training, 'depending on what is available,' (P20) and 'Local authority CPD only as others too expensive and cannot always guaranteed uplift in quality of teaching,' (P59). One mentioned wanting staff 'to be able to have more access to trainers,' (P5).

Three references were made to using **Staff interests** to guide the professional development planned, 'We offer a regular variety of CPD tailored to each teachers' interests, skills and to broaden their expertise within the classroom,' (P46).

Costs & funding was again mentioned as an inhibiting factor to plans for professional development (P59) (1 reference) and the **Quality of courses** (1 reference), which did not always lead to improved practice (P59).

3.3.4 What settings would like to see available in terms of professional development and qualifications

Participants told us what they would most like to see available in terms of professional development and qualifications (Q8b). The most prevalent themes (Figure 3.12) included the following: Demand & supply (14 refs, 30.4%); Understanding of Montessori (13 refs, 30.1%); Costs & funding (9 refs, 16.1%); Qualification levels (5 refs, 7.8%) ; and Time (2 refs, 4.8%).

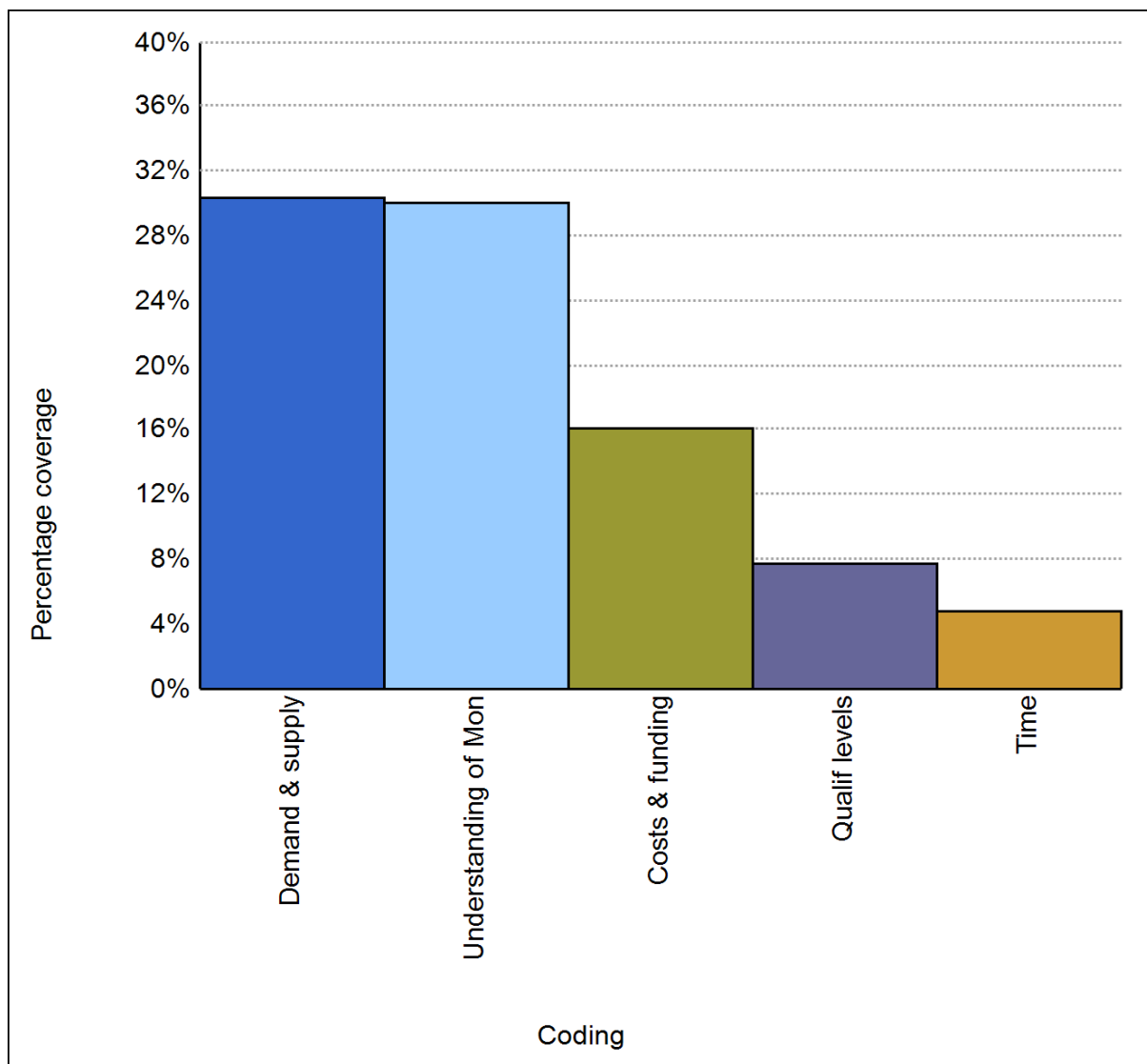


Figure 3.12 Themes attributed to what settings would like to see available in terms of professional development and qualifications (Q8b).

Demand & supply (14 refs, 30.4%), participants want to see more local training at suitable times (P9), more evening and distant/online learning opportunities (P5, P21,P36, P40, P54, P59), and 'More + wider variety + low cost online Montessori training courses,' (P21). Settings had to balance the demands of staffing their provision, demands on staff time and adding value to their knowledge, practice and qualifications. As P44 put it, it would be helpful to have short courses with credits to add onto to previous qualifications.

Add on short courses that you can build upon for your personal professional development. I would have loved to have undertaken a Montessori Foundation Degree, but gave my staff the opportunity of undertaking that training and supported them over the two years in which they did it. If I were able to add modules to my current International Diploma that would be a help and my staff feel the same. If you are working in a childcare setting, you cannot give up too much time in the evenings to undertake courses. (P44)

Several participants wanted to see a variety of new **Understanding of Montessori** courses (13 refs, 30.1%). The suggestions included a variety of basic or awareness courses, such as 'return to Montessori,' (P6), 'Montessori awareness - we struggle as we don't need fully qualified staff as we have enough, but a Montessori awareness training/certificate would be great,' (P34) a course for all staff to gain 'an understanding of Montessori theory and how important the environment children in effects their wellbeing now and in the future,' (P10), and 'Online Montessori qualification for Level 3 staff who are working in a Montessori with short workshop to assess skills - must be affordable, (P2). One participant suggested that Montessori apprenticeships would be 'key in getting qualified staff into rural locations,' (P33). A desire for Montessori training in leadership (P39, P45) and working with parents (P39) were also suggested, as was 'More cross over between different approaches, Steiner, Froebel, Montessori, Forest School,' (P20). As P38 pointed out, there needs to be 'More cost-effective opportunities for Montessori qualifications.'

It was clear that **Costs & funding** (9 refs, 16.1%) were important considerations in what participants would like to see available, from more affordable courses (P3, P38, P42, P55) to funding available for training (P12, P26, P47, P51). Comments included 'I am an EYP - reinstatement of the Graduate Leader Fund would be appreciated to match my level of qualification,' (P12);

Level 6 MCI professional training delivered locally. I used to use my Montessori Early Years setting as an MCI satellite college for the Level 4 diploma. The government funding was withdrawn, and it became impossible to enrol enough students. The demand was there but without funding many interested people could not enrol,' (P26).

This theme intersected with that of **Qualification levels** (5 refs, 7.8%), where participants suggested that the lack of funding made it difficult for staff to study towards the next level of qualification (P12, P60).

We need a qualification that encourages the student to start their studies from a lower level i.e. level 2 to then move up to level 3,' (P60).

One participant suggested that the increased costs of the MSA conference were prohibitive, 'Tickets to the MSA conference doubled last year - that is too expensive for all my staff and me to attend, and as a team I believe we should all go,' (P12).

Time (2 refs, 4.8%) to support staff during training was seen as an issue by P4, while P59 suggested that if staff completed courses in their own time, they would be more motivated 'to be better practitioners rather than sent by manager'.

3.4 Employment issues

This section covers how long Montessori employees have been employed in their current setting and in the sector more widely. This section also explores turnover, staff pay, and reasons for staff leaving Montessori settings.

How long staff have worked in current setting

Table 3.14 How long employees have worked in current setting (settings N = 48).

| <i>Length</i> | Total staff | % | <i>Number of staff at each setting</i> | | | | | | | | | | Total settings | % |
|-----------------|--------------------|----------|--|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|-----------------------|----------|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | | |
| Up to 1 year | 49 | 13.0 | 12 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 26 | 54.2 |
| 1.1 – 3 years | 84 | 22.3 | 15 | 6 | 10 | 4 | 1 | 1 | | | | | 37 | 77.1 |
| 3.1 – 5 years | 65 | 17.3 | 8 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | | | | 26 | 54.2 |
| 5.1 to 10 years | 75 | 19.9 | 15 | 9 | 4 | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 32 | 66.7 |
| 10+ years | 103 | 27.4 | 11 | 7 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 3 | | 2 | | | 34 | 70.8 |
| Total | 376 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Table 3.14 shows that almost half of staff reported on in this study (47.3%) had worked in their current setting for 5 years or more. Out of the 48 settings on this question, 34 (70.8%) reported that they had staff who had been there for more than 10 years.

How long staff have worked in the Early Childhood education and care sector

Table 3.15 How long employees have been in Early Childhood Education Care sector (settings N = 48).

| Length | Total staff | % | Number of staff at each setting | | | | | | | | | | | | Total settings | % |
|-----------------|-------------|------|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----------------|---|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | | | |
| Up to 1 year | 16 | 5.1 | 7 | 3 | 1 | | | | | | | | | 11 | 22.9 | |
| 1.1 – 3 years | 30 | 9.6 | 18 | 3 | 2 | | | | | | | | | 23 | 47.9 | |
| 3.1 – 5 years | 45 | 14.4 | 8 | 4 | 4 | | | 1 | | | | 1 | | 18 | 37.5 | |
| 5.1 to 10 years | 79 | 25.2 | 9 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 1 | | | | 1 | | 1 | 27 | 56.3 | |
| 10+ years | 143 | 45.7 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | | 38 | 79.2 | |
| Total | 313 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Vacancies and turnover

Table 3.16 Number of current vacancies (settings N = 57).

| <i>Number of staff at each setting</i> | | | |
|--|----------|----------|-----------------|
| Total | 1 | 2 | Total |
| staff | | | settings |
| 19 | 11 | 4 | 15 |

From Table 3.16 there were in total 19 vacancies reported across 15 settings. At this point in the survey 57 settings were engaged in responding, so this corresponds to approximately 26.3% of settings with at least one current vacancy.

When settings (N = 56) responded to the question about how many staff members have left in the last two years, the average response to this question was 2.13 (SD 1.85). This suggests that on average, each setting reported approximately two members of staff leaving, though it should be noted that figures reported were varied and ranged from 0 – 8. This average figure is almost identical to the average number of new starters reported; 2.14 (SD 1.78). It is perhaps not surprising that the number of new starters is similar to the number of staff leaving.

Reasons for leaving

Settings were asked about the reasons why staff had left. From Table 3.17 below it is possible to see that just over half (51%) of settings reported that staff left due to family reasons. The next most common reason for staff leaving was staff moving to a different sector for job that is better paid (17 settings corresponding to 33.3%). Just over a quarter of settings (25.5%) reported that staff left as they moved to a different geographic area. There were also numerous ‘other’ reasons given for staff leaving from just under a quarter of settings (23.5%), which included reasons such as staff retirement or the closure or relocation of the setting.

Table 3.17 Reasons for staff leaving the setting (*settings N = 51*).

| Reasons staff left the setting | Number of settings | % |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|------|
| Family reasons (e.g. maternity) | 26 | 51.0 |
| Different sector – more money | 17 | 33.3 |
| Moving to another geographic area | 13 | 25.5 |
| Other | 12 | 23.5 |
| Same sector – same grade | 12 | 23.5 |
| Different sector – change | 11 | 21.6 |
| Same sector – promotion | 5 | 9.8 |
| Further/Higher Education | 3.9 | 7.6 |
| Retraining | 3.9 | 7.6 |
| Different sector – better t&c | 3 | 5.9 |

Salary

Table 3.18 Number of staff at each pay group (settings N = 44).

| | Number of staff | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----------------|------|
| *Pay group | Total staff | % | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 16 | Total settings | % |
| <£6 | 8 | 2.3 | 6 | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | | 8 | 18.2 |
| £6-£7 | 3 | 0.9 | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 2.3 |
| £7.01-£7.50 | 4 | 1.2 | 2 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | 3 | 6.8 |
| £7.51-£8.00 | 11 | 3.2 | 4 | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | 6 | 13.6 |
| £8.01-£8.50 | 26 | 7.6 | | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 1 | | 4 | 9.1 |
| £8.51-£9.00 | 59 | 17.2 | 7 | 4 | 5 | 3 | | | 1 | | | 1 | | | | 21 | 47.7 |
| £9.01-£9.50 | 32 | 9.3 | 7 | 5 | 1 | | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | | 15 | 34.1 |
| £9.51-£10.00 | 39 | 11.4 | 9 | 6 | 1 | | 1 | | | | | 1 | | | | 18 | 40.9 |
| >£10 | 161 | 46.9 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 2 | | 3 | | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 37 | 84.1 |
| Total | 343 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

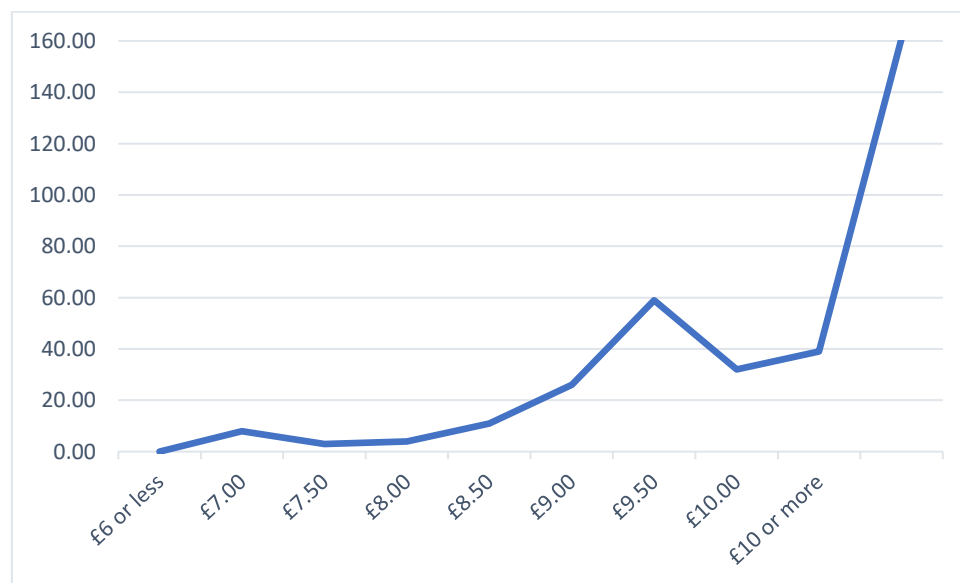


Figure 3.13 Upper pay rates reported by Montessori settings (settings N = 44).

Table 3.18 and Figure 3.13 show that the most common pay group staff are on is >£10 per hour (representing 46.9% of staff reported in this study). Of the 44 settings who responded to this question, 37 of them (84.1%) had staff on >£10. Just 26 of the 343 (7.6%) staff recorded earned less than £8 an hour.

Staff contracts

Settings were asked how many staff members were permanent and how many staff members were temporary. The overwhelming majority of staff reported were on permanent contracts, with 42 out

of 48 settings (87.5%) reporting that all staff were permanent, and the remaining 6 settings (12.5%) with a mixture of on permanent and temporary contracts. None of these six settings had more than two members of staff on temporary contracts.

3.4.1 Recruitment challenges faced by settings over the past 2 years

Participants told us about the challenges to recruitment that they had faced in their settings over the past two years (Q12). References were overwhelmingly related to the theme of **Demand & supply** (34 refs, 66%) (Figure 3.14). **Costs & funding** accounted for 7 references, 19.7%; **Quality of courses or candidates** 6 refs, 12%; **Career or promotion opportunities** 2 refs, 6.1%; **Inhouse upskilling** 2 refs, 5.2%; **Qualification levels** 2 refs, 4.9%.

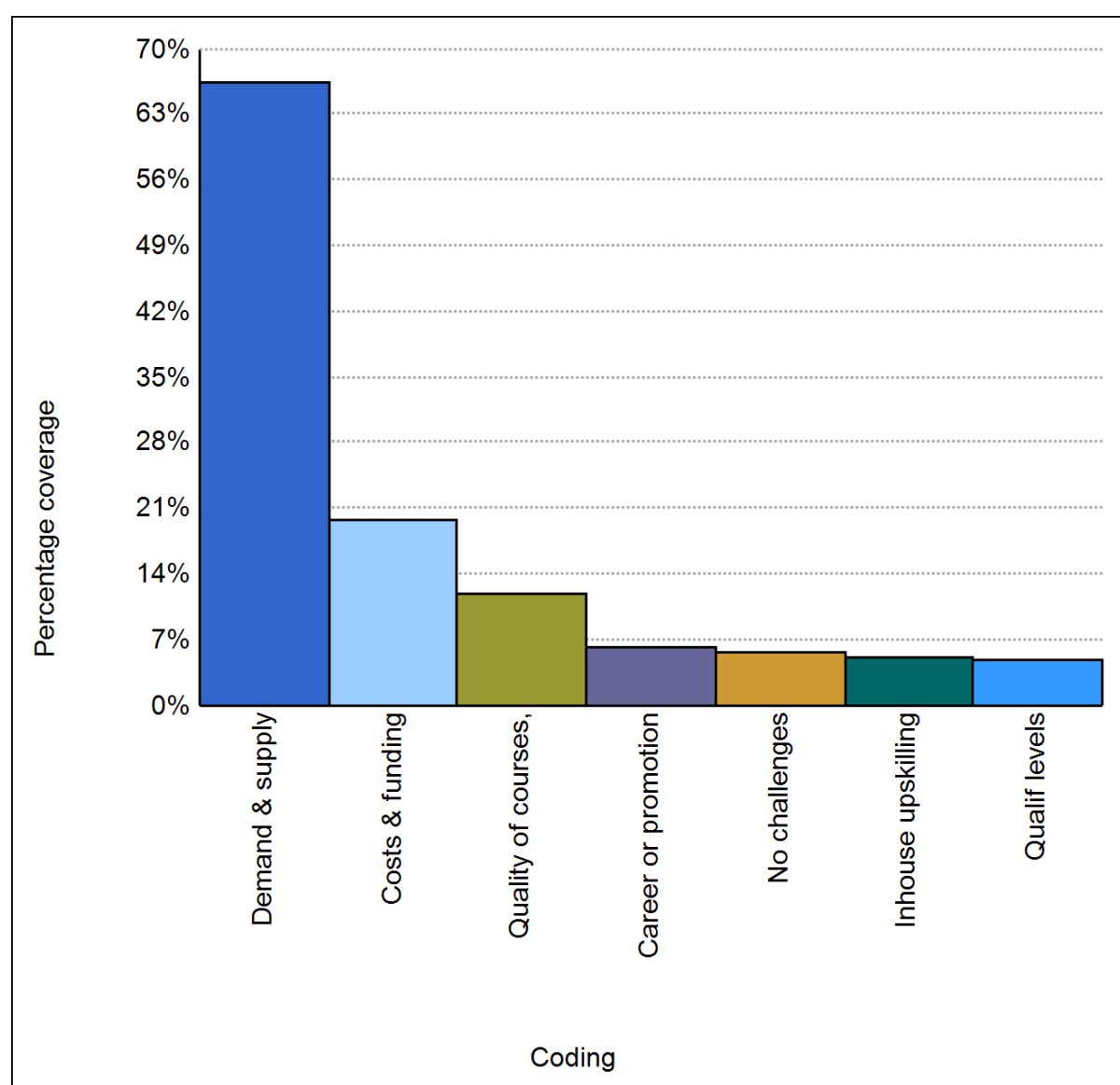


Figure 3.14 Themes attributed to recruitment challenges faced by settings over the past 2 years (Q12).

Eight references (5.7%) were made to there being **No challenges** to recruitment over the past two years.

Within the theme of **Demand & Supply** (34 refs), the main challenge faced in recruitment was sub-code (26 refs), that of Lack of Montessori trained staff available. 'It can be difficult finding Montessori trained teachers,' (P7), in the local area (P43), particularly who were willing to work in home-based setting (P9), who fully understood the commitment and role (P15), and who wanted to work long hours (P19). The process of recruitment was also difficult, lengthy and expensive, 'almost impossible - takes months and recruitment agencies don't understand requirements and MCI are expensive and slow,' (P40). Sometimes there were very few, or no responses at all, from Montessori qualified staff to advertisements (P24, P42, P47, P57). Some responses suggested that not all Montessori qualified staff were of a quality that enabled them to do the job successfully, 'Montessori practitioners don't have sufficient teaching or classroom experience,' (P41); 'Suitable candidates - Montessori qualification often of very poor standard - will not employ MCI qualified as have had very bad experiences in the past,' (P49). P16 summarised some of the difficulties faced, *Uncertainty around where to advertise for Montessori trained staff; the cost of advertising; having advertised within Montessori International magazine we received ZERO responses from within the UK; also, where are all the male Montessorians? We would LOVE to have a male influence within our setting but there just aren't any.* (P16).

Indeed, participants believed that in general candidates coming forward for employment were of poor quality, 'Poor quality candidates, lack of candidates applying, unrealistic terms and salary expectation commensurate with qualification, experience and quality of work,' (P56), added to which there were fewer candidates applying at all (P44, P11).

It is very hard to recruit full time staff, you don't really get many people apply for the job, so have little choice in trying to employ quality staffing. I feel this is due to long hours low pay, it's not a career people want to go into, (P11).

Costs & funding in relation to recruitment challenges (7 references) were linked to the expenses of advertising (P16, P40), but also to the challenges of paying staff salaries (P38, P39, P45, P55). There were additional challenges regarding changes to employment costs, 'I am a childminder. I used to employ an Assistant. Now that I would have to pay pension contributions, increased salary costs, it does not make sense for me to employ an assistant,' (P50).

The poor **Quality of candidates** was cited in 6 references as one of the challenges of recruitment in recent years. Participants what they were seeing in terms of applicants, 'Staff starting with qualifications but not wanting to do the work. Lack of suitable candidates,' (P59); 'Low quality of applicants,' (P51); and 'poor writing proficiency, not sociable, do not attend interview & trials,' (P30).

3.4.2 Settings' plans for recruitment in next 12 months

We asked participants to tell us about their recruitment plans for the next 12 months. Bearing in mind that the survey took place mainly during the pre-Covid-19 era, the plans they describe are quite likely to now be out of date. Nonetheless, they offer a snapshot of a sector's recruitment plans prior to that period (Table 3.19). Twenty-two participants stated that they would not be recruiting over the next 12 months. This was almost matched by the number of settings that did plan to recruit (20 references). Four participants were not yet sure.

Table 3.19 Q13 Settings' plans for recruitment next 12 months – sub-codes under Demand & supply theme.

| <i>Sub-code</i> | Frequency |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| Recruitment plans NO | 22 |
| Recruitment plans YES | 20 |
| Recruitment plans DON'T KNOW | 4 |

In the context of recruitment plans, some participants again mentioned apprenticeships, 'I am actively promoting apprenticeships within the local community, schools and colleges,' (P33), and how useful it would be if Montessori apprenticeships were available,

I'm am going to look at recruiting an apprentice, so that if someone leaves, I already have someone to step into the vacancy. It would be good if Montessori were offer an apprentice scheme, that may help with the recruitment difficulties for rural Montessori settings, (P11).

Not all participants were optimistic about finding the staff they needed, 'Need 2 members of staff from shrinking pool of candidates,' (P59).

Amongst those not planning to recruit staff in the next 12 months, one participant noted that although a vacancy was likely to arise amongst the staff, costs meant that the post would remain unfilled, 'I have a staff member leaving at the end of this academic year, I will not be replacing her due to financial constraints,' (P39).

3.5 Settings information

Number of paid staff at each setting

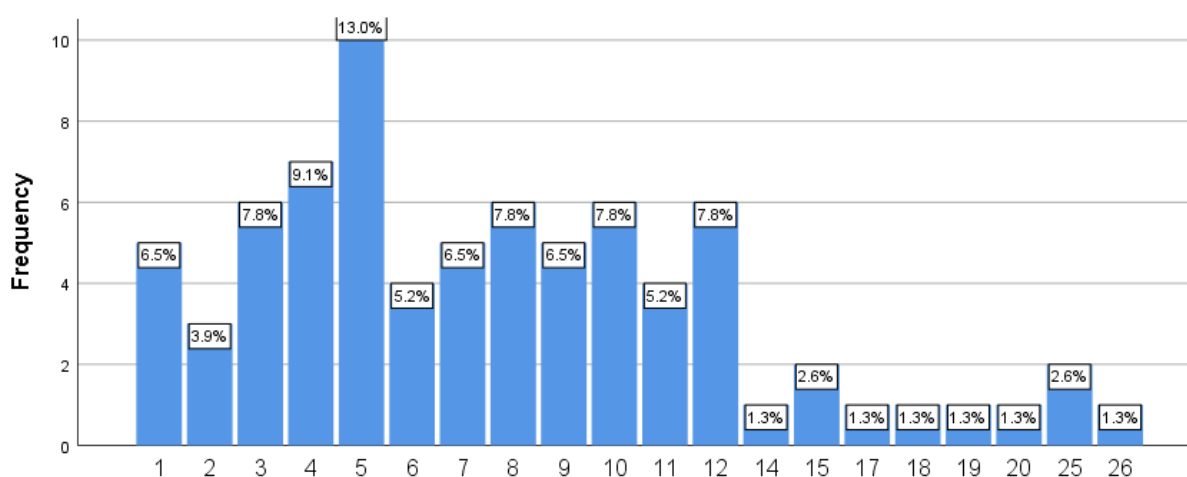


Figure 3.15 Bar chart showing number of paid staff at each setting (settings N = 77).

Figure 3.15 displays the number of paid staff at each setting. The spread of these responses ranged between 1 – 26. There were five settings (6.5%) that reported only one member of paid staff, and one setting (1.3%) reported 26 paid staff members.

The mean (average) number of paid staff at each setting was **8.17** (Standard deviation: SD 5.58). It is also possible to see from Figure 1 that the most common number of paid staff was five, with ten out of the 77 settings (13%) having five paid staff.

Figure 3.16 shows the different types of settings who took part in the survey. From Figure 3.16 it is possible to see that 23 settings were Nursery schools (46.0%), 12 settings were Day nurseries (24.0%), 6 (12.0%) were childminders and 4 were Pre-Schools (8.0%). Of the settings who classified as 'other', there were a number of responses including; 'Primary School and Nursery', 'Independent Montessori school for 2-11 years' and 'Education centre for home educated children'.

Type of setting

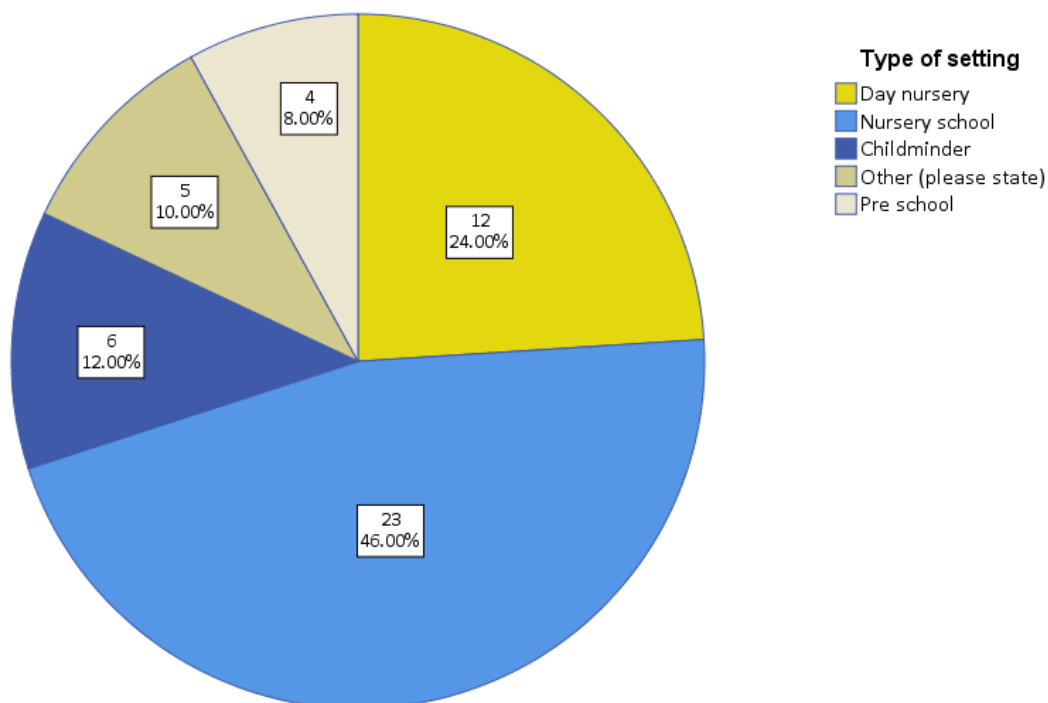


Figure 3.16 Pie chart representing the types of Montessori setting (settings N = 50).

Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

Overall, 31 settings completed the task of going to an external website, inputting their Postcode and being able to download their IMD decile scores. Low IMD decile score reflect higher levels of deprivation. For this set of responses, the average IMD decile score was 7.0 (SD 2.54) but the range of scores was between 1 – 10.

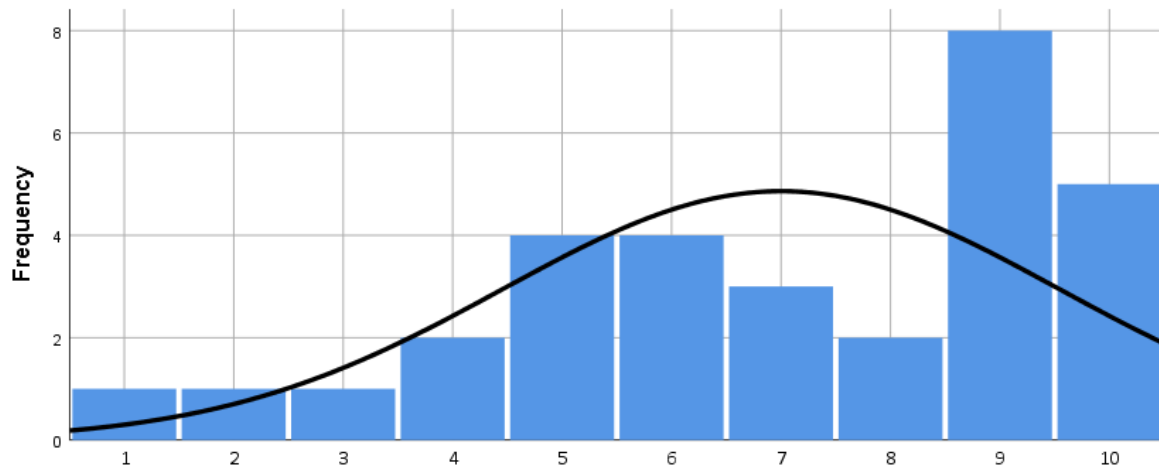


Figure 3.17 Frequency and range of IMD decile scores (settings N = 31).

From Figure 3.17 it is possible to see that there was a wide range of IMD decile scores, but that the most common score was 9 (8 of the 31 settings - 25.8% of settings). As can be seen, 42% of settings were in the highest two IMD deciles, which have the lowest deprivation levels. Only 9.7% of settings were in the lowest three IMD deciles, which have the highest deprivation levels.

Quality

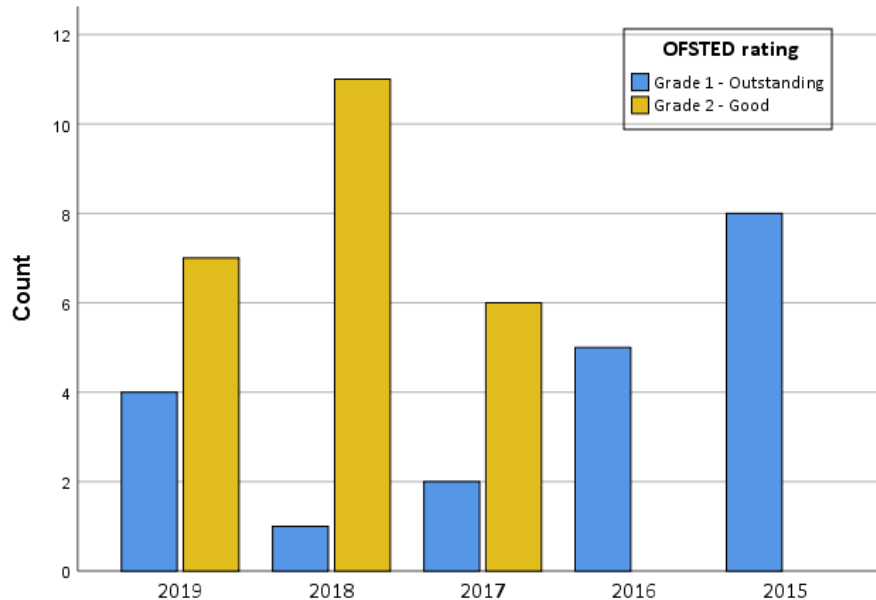


Figure 3.18 Ofsted ratings and year the rating was issued (settings N = 45).

Figure 3.18 displays the Ofsted ratings and year issued. Overall, there were 21 Grade 1 ratings issued (46.7%) and 24 Grade 2 ratings issued (53.3%) to the settings who took part in this study. There were no reported Grade 3 or 4 ratings.

Child age groups

Table 3.20 Child age groups, both on the Roll and Registered at each session.

| <i>On the Roll</i> | N | Mean | Range | <i>Registered at each Session</i> | N | Mean | Range |
|--------------------|----|-------|--------|---------------------------------------|----|-------|--------|
| Birth – 2 | 16 | 8.27 | 1 – 22 | Birth – 2 | 16 | 6.67 | 1 – 21 |
| 2.1 – 3.0 | 47 | 12.02 | 1 – 36 | 2.1 – 3.0 | 46 | 7.26 | 1 – 32 |
| 3.1 – 4+ | 48 | 21.40 | 1 – 92 | 3.1 – 4+ | 47 | 14.47 | 1 – 55 |

Table 3.20 shows that on average, settings had approximately 8 children on the roll from Birth - 2. Only 16 of the 48 settings who responded to this survey reported that they have sessions for children under 2 years old (33.3%) . All of the 48 settings provided sessions for children age 2.1+ apart from one setting. The average size of the birth - 2 session is almost 7, and this is similar for children aged 2.1-3.0. The average session size for children aged 3.1-4+ was nearly 15.

4. Discussion

Demographic features of the workforce

The Montessori workforce tends to have more older staff members than the general ECEC workforce in England and fewer staff members under 25 years. Only 9.95% of Montessori staff were aged between 16-25 years, whereas the general ECEC workforce has 20% who are aged 24 years or less (CEEDA, 2019b). Montessori had 49.3% of its staff members aged 40 years and over, whereas across the general ECEC workforce 36% of staff are aged over 41 years (CEEDA, 2019b). Forward planning is necessary for the Montessori workforce as 13.4% of staff are aged 55 years or over and so will be approaching retirement during the next 10 years.

The Montessori workforce has potentially slightly more members identifying as male, with 95% female and 5% male, than the general ECEC workforce, which ranged from 1-7% (NDNA, 2019) or 4% (CEEDA, 2019a). This is a slight increase from the results shown in previous Montessori research in 2013 of 4% male staff (MSA, 2013). Also, 32% of the responding Montessori settings in the current survey had at least one male staff member.

A higher proportion of the Montessori workforce is White at 89.1% compared to the general ECEC workforce at 86.9% (Bonetti, 2019). The Montessori workforce employs slightly higher proportions of non-EU staff from outside the UK at 3.8% compared to the general ECEC sector at 3.6% (NDNA, 2019). However, the Montessori workforce employs lower proportions of staff who are EU nationals from outside the UK at 8.3%, compared to the general ECEC sector at 10.8% (NDNA, 2019). It is worth noting that although these percentages for the Montessori workforce are lower than across the general ECEC workforce for being from outside the UK, they could indicate future recruitment

and labour supply shortages should rights to work in the UK of the people affected be altered during the final Brexit agreements, or should other policy changes to immigration occur.

Qualifications

Most Montessori staff (53%) have either level 3 (28.8%) or level 4 (24.4%) qualifications, indicating that the qualification levels *up to* level 4 tend to be higher than the national ECEC picture of 52% with level 3 as the highest qualification (NDNA, 2019). The most commonly held Montessori qualification in the survey was level 4, the MCI Diploma (63% of staff with a Montessori qualification). CEEDA estimates that 76% of the general ECEC workforce had qualifications at level 3 or above (CEEDA, 2019c, p.2), whereas the figure for the Montessori workforce is 80.6% of staff with qualifications at level 3 or above. CEEDA estimated that 13% of the general ECEC held qualifications at level 6 or above (CEEDA, 2019c, p.2), which is considerably lower than the Montessori figure of 21.9% of staff at level 6 or above. However, other estimates show that staff with degree level qualifications or above in the general ECEC workforce comprised 25.1% (Bonetti, 2019). It should be noted, though, that these general ECEC figures are for childcare workers according to the Labour Force Survey definition. This includes teaching assistants in schools and educational support assistants, who tend to have higher proportions of degree qualifications; 31.5% of teaching assistants and 28.1% of educational support assistants have a degree, but only 16.5% of nursery nurses and assistants do, and 20.6% of childminders (Bonetti 2019, p.5). Again, this shows the difficulties involved in making comparisons across disparate sets of data. Nonetheless, it is also worth noting that previous Montessori research showed that in 2013 19% of staff held a PGCE or EYPS (eligible now to be referred to as EYT) (MSA 2013), while the results of this current study show only 11.9% of Montessori staff holding either QTS, PGCE or EYT. It may be that Montessori ECEC settings are finding it more difficult to recruit staff with such qualifications, as is the case for the whole sector, partly owing to financial pressures and partly to fewer such staff being available.

Around 12.4% of Montessori staff were currently studying for higher level qualifications, most of whom were studying for level 3 or level 4 qualifications. This is lower than across the general ECEC workforce, in which 14.9% of staff were studying for higher qualifications in 2018 (Bonetti, 2019). However, this national figure could have dropped since 2018 as the trend from 2008 through 2013 to 2018 had shown falling levels of staff studying for higher level qualifications (Bonetti, 2019). Of those Montessori staff studying for a higher-level Montessori qualification, most were studying for the MCI Diploma at level 4 (66%).

Professional development and training

The national ECEC picture shows that 39% of settings focus primarily on mandatory professional development and training (NDNA, 2019). Nationally, the cost of courses was a serious issue in limiting professional development, along with difficulties in providing staff cover and the timing of courses. All of these were reflected in the results from this Montessori survey. Montessori settings reported that challenges to staff training and qualifications were primarily costs of courses and costs of staff cover, the timing of courses, and limited access (Demand and supply). Courses were often at the wrong time of day for operational efficiency, but courses at evenings and weekends also threatened staff free time. Rural locations of settings made access to courses very difficult. Courses that had previously been provided at low cost or free of charge by local authorities were no longer

available, or were now charged for, had limited places and offered far less range. Settings also found it difficult to judge which courses beyond local authority provision were worth paying for. A further cost issue was the pressure and indeed desire to pay staff who had gained higher level qualifications a higher salary, but the inability to do so owing to the low funding levels. The reinstatement of the Graduate Leader Fund or equivalent was called for. In addition, some courses which led to levels 2 or 3 qualifications were thought to be of questionable quality in terms of providing competent practitioners.

Of particular interest is the reported lack of access to a wide range of Montessori professional development training at appropriate levels, in appropriate formats or locations, and access to Montessori trained staff when vacancies occurred. Again, cost was an issue given that no government funding was available for undertaking Montessori qualifications. It was also felt that more needed to be done to enhance understanding and recognition of Montessori qualifications.

Plans for professional development across Montessori settings, apart from more Montessori training, were to update knowledge and practice regarding special educational needs and disabilities, speech and language and outdoor learning.

Montessori settings would like to see more professional development to include courses that:

- were closer to their locality
- were available online, but well supported
- were of low cost or at least affordable
- offered short, but credit-building modules
- increased understanding of Montessori, with more Montessori level 3 training provided
- offered 'return to Montessori' and 'Montessori awareness' options
- offered Montessori apprenticeships.

Deployment of staff

As is the case across the ECEC sector, higher qualified staff in Montessori nurseries were more likely to be deployed to work directly with 3- and 4-year olds, with lower qualified staff deployed to work with the under 3-year-olds. This reflects the national ECEC situation as reported in the Evaluation of the Graduate Leader Fund (Mathers *et al.*, 2011.), in which it was found that less than half of EYPs were deployed in the infant/toddler rooms observed, whereas 91% were working in the preschool rooms observed (Mathers *et al.*, 2011, p.6). Lower rates of EYPs employed in a room were associated with indicators of lower quality education and care (Mathers *et al.*, 2011).

Employment issues

Of the Montessori staff in the survey, 47.3% had been with the same employer for 5 years or more, which is higher than the general ECEC workforce of 44% with the same employer for at least 5 years (Bonetti, 2019). Forty-five per cent of Montessori staff have worked in the ECEC sector for over 10 years. Amongst the Montessori settings, 26% reported a current vacancy, compared to the national ECEC picture of a 24% staff turnover rate (NDNA, 2019). Reasons for staff leaving Montessori settings were very similar to the reasons given at a national level, although with different emphases. Montessori staff left primarily for family reasons, such as following maternity leave (51%), or moving to a different sector for better pay (33.3%). Nationally, reasons for leaving ECEC posts were primarily

for a higher salary, to work closer to home or for a career break after maternity leave (NDNA 2019; CEEDA 2019b).

National ECEC salaries in 2019 were stated as £8.74 on average for those without teacher status, who comprised the majority of employees, and £13.97 for managers/owners (CEEDA, 1029). Of the Montessori staff in the survey, 46.9% earned over £10 per hour and 37.9% earned between £8.50 and £10, so it seems that Montessori salaries are slightly higher on average than those in the general ECEC sector. However, there were also 7.6% of Montessori staff earning less than £8 per hour.

Montessori settings reported the biggest recruitment challenges over the last two years to have been the lack of access to Montessori trained staff or staff with a sufficiently high quality of Montessori practice. They also reported that it was very costly to advertise for Montessori staff and it often did not bring results of suitably trained or qualified applicants. Difficulties in recruiting suitably qualified staff generally is a national concern (NDNA, 2019). Of the Montessori settings in the survey, although staff turnover was reported, 22 settings did not intend to recruit and 4 more did not yet know. As 45 settings responded to that question, 48.8% of settings responding stated no intention to recruit. Again, Montessori apprenticeships were seen as a possible route towards better recruitment, if they were available.

Quality and Indices of Multiple Deprivation

Montessori settings in the survey had higher Ofsted ratings than the general ECEC sector. All Montessori settings in the survey that responded to the question had ratings of Good (53.3%) or Outstanding (46.7%), compared to ECEC settings nationally, at 97% Good (73%) or Outstanding (24%). Montessori settings in the survey clearly had a much higher proportion of settings rated as Outstanding than the national picture. Settings employing staff with higher qualification levels tend to be associated with greater likelihood of achieving a higher inspection rating, (Payler and Davis, 2017, p.21). This is also an increase in high Ofsted ratings since the 2013 MSA research, which showed that 91% of Montessori settings at that time had Good or Outstanding Ofsted ratings.

It should be noted that although Montessori settings in the survey were found in locations across the full range of Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) scores, they were more likely to be found in the areas of lowest deprivation. Forty-two per cent of Montessori settings were located in the highest two deciles of IMD meaning they were in the areas of lowest deprivation. Only 9.7% of Montessori settings were found in the lowest three deciles of IMD, meaning they were in the areas of highest deprivation. Although more entitlement funded ECEC providers are in advantaged areas than in areas of disadvantage generally in England, the pattern for Montessori is more extreme than the national pattern of ECEC provision. Further, settings in more advantaged areas are more likely to achieve an Outstanding Ofsted rating nationally than those in more deprived areas; 18% of providers in the 20% most deprived areas were graded as outstanding, compared with 27% of providers in the least deprived areas (NAO 2020, p.33).

5. Conclusions

The conclusions are organised across the following themes:

1. Well qualified, experienced Montessori staff and higher Ofsted ratings;

2. Threats to maintaining qualification levels, difficulties in professional development and poor external recognition of Montessori qualifications;
3. Insecure future supply of trained Montessori workforce and with limited diversity;
4. Montessori provision is more likely to be in areas of lower disadvantage and, within settings, higher qualified staff are deployed with older children.

Conclusions

Well qualified, experienced Montessori staff and higher Ofsted ratings

- The Montessori workforce has a higher proportion of staff at level 3 or above than the general ECEC workforce and a higher proportion of staff with level 6 or above qualifications, although the picture is slightly complicated by differing means of collecting data.
- More Montessori staff have been with their employer for over five years than across the general ECEC workforce. Forty-five per cent of Montessori staff have worked in the ECEC sector for over 10 years.
- Montessori settings in the survey were more likely to have achieved a Good or Outstanding Ofsted rating than the general ECEC sector, particularly a rating of Outstanding.

Threats to maintaining qualification levels, difficulties in professional development and poor external recognition of Montessori qualifications

- There appears to be a falling proportion of Montessori staff with PGCE/QTS/EYT compared to Montessori staff in 2013.
- Slightly fewer Montessori staff were studying for qualifications than the general ECEC workforce, against a national pattern of falling rates.
- A range of difficulties are faced in Montessori settings regarding professional development. These are mainly high costs, staff cover, poor timing of courses, access to courses and difficulties in deciding which courses are worth doing. There appeared to be fewer accessible choices for professional development at greater costs and with less assurance of making the right choices for quality enhancement and value.
- Access to Montessori training, access to qualified Montessori staff for recruitment, and recognition and support for Montessori qualifications outside Montessori were all felt to be challenging and in need of improvement.

Insecure future supply of trained Montessori workforce and with limited diversity

- The Montessori workforce is older than the general ECEC workforce. It has a higher proportion of males than in general according to some national estimates, and a higher proportion than Montessori had in 2013.
- The Montessori workforce is predominantly White compared to the general ECEC workforce. It employs lower proportions (12.1%) of non-EU non-UK staff and EU staff from outside the UK than the general ECEC workforce (14.4%).
- Current vacancies in the Montessori workforce are at 26%, slightly higher than in the general ECEC workforce, with staff primarily leaving for family reasons or improved pay in a different sector.

- The Montessori workforce appears to be slightly higher paid than the general ECEC workforce, although up-to-date comparisons are difficult to make. This may reflect the higher proportions of older, more experienced and more highly qualified staff in the Montessori workforce.
- Recruitment of Montessori qualified staff is expensive and difficult to achieve, with suggestions that there was a shortage of Montessori qualified staff available.

Montessori provision is more likely to be in areas of lower disadvantage and, within settings, higher qualified staff are deployed with older children

- Montessori settings are more likely to be in areas of low deprivation than provision across the general ECEC sector.
- Higher qualified Montessori staff were more likely to be deployed to work directly with older children than with younger children and babies.

5.1 Recommendations

- Consider how to plan for the replenishment of the Montessori workforce, often with level 4 qualifications, whose members will retire up to the next 10 years. Consider the through-flow of Montessori training places and whether, and if so how, they may need to be increased and supported to ensure a ready supply of Montessori qualified staff.
- Ensure that a ready supply of Montessori trained degree level teaching staff is coming through for employment in the next few years. This might include short Montessori training courses for Early Childhood Studies Degree graduates or similar.
- Encourage recruitment of a more diverse Montessori workforce with more staff from minority ethnic groups and more males.
- Consider plans for amelioration regarding potential labour supply difficulties if immigration policy changes or Brexit agreements mean a loss of staff from non-EU non-UK backgrounds or EU but outside UK backgrounds.
- Promote more fully outside the Montessori sector the equivalence of Montessori qualifications and the benefits of the Montessori approach.
- Consider the viability, accessibility and delivery of a variety of Montessori qualifications and professional development courses including:
 - online, but well-supported courses;
 - rural locations;
 - aiming at varying levels and with varying lengths;
 - bite-sized, but with credit accumulation;
 - Montessori apprenticeships;
 - return to Montessori or Montessori awareness courses;
 - special educational needs and disabilities;
 - speech and language development;
 - outdoor learning.
- Consider ways to encourage more pedagogic leadership for babies and children aged under 3 years from more highly qualified Montessori staff.

- Consider the feasibility of encouraging more Montessori provision in areas of higher disadvantage including lobbying for government support to make Montessori ECEC more accessible to children in disadvantaged areas.
- Lobby for higher ECEC funding levels.
- Lobby for better national and local government strategic guidance, support and funding for professional development. Lobby for funding to support Montessori training.

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Appendix 1 Survey questions



Online Survey

Professor Jane Payler and Dr Stephanie Bennett from **The Open University** would like to invite you to take part in this research study, funded by **Montessori St. Nicholas**. Before you decide, we would like you to understand why the research is being conducted and what it would involve for you to take part. This survey has been produced in collaboration with Montessori St. Nicholas.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to survey Montessori early childhood education and care settings in the UK for data on the composition of the workforce and its qualifications and to compare those data with UK-wide data on general ECEC workforce composition and qualifications.

Objectives:

- 1: Carry out an online survey to Montessori ECEC settings in UK to gather data on workforce composition and qualifications;
- 2: Compare the analysed results of the Montessori survey with contemporary data on workforce composition and qualifications for general ECEC settings across the UK;
- 3: Bring findings together in a full report of the research;
- 4: Present the findings of the research at a launch/dissemination event, date and location to be agreed, late 2020.

You have been chosen to take part in this survey because you are a Montessori school in the UK with provision for young children.

Do I have to take part?

There is no obligation for you to take part and it is entirely up to you to decide whether you would like to join the study. Being a member of the MSA does NOT mean that you have to take part in this survey.

What will happen if I take part?

You be asked to answer a short set of survey questions. All responses are entirely confidential and anonymous. All data collected will be held securely and password protected. The survey will take you around 15 minutes to complete.

Expenses and payments

The survey is free to complete and there is no cost to you apart from your time. No expense, payments or incentives are available.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Aside from using your time, no disadvantages are anticipated. Your identity will never be revealed in my final report or any published material, and all data will be presented in aggregated (summary) format.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst it is unlikely that you will receive any direct benefit as a result of taking part in the study, you will be contributing towards important academic research. It will help us with up-to-date knowledge about Montessori early childhood education's workforce in the UK and how it compares to the national picture for all ECEC settings.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

Yes. All responses are entirely confidential. All reasonable steps to retain anonymity will be maintained. The survey will not ask you to reveal any personal identifying information. Your data will be collected online through the online survey tool Qualtrics. The survey will be distributed using Qualtrics' Anonymous Links, whereby no contact personal data will be associated with the resulting response and will enable Anonymize Response in Survey Options so that no location or IP information are collected. Using both means that the completed responses will be completely anonymous with no embedded identifying information.

The raw survey responses can only be accessed by the research team, Dr Bennett and Professor Payler, and the data file will be password protected. Survey responses will be stored up for up to 10 years. After this time, the data file will be deleted.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

All questions are optional. If you wish to abandon the survey before completion, you can simply leave the website or simply miss out any questions you would rather not answer. If you complete all or part of the survey, but then decide you would like to withdraw your data, please be aware that it will *not be possible* due to the anonymous nature of online surveys.

What if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak to the research team, who will do their best to answer your questions. Jane Payler can be contacted at jane.payler@open.ac.uk and Stephanie Bennett can be contacted at s.bennett@open.ac.uk. If you are not satisfied after speaking with the research team, please contact Steven Hutchinson on steven.hutchinson@open.ac.uk.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results will form part of a report to Montessori St. Nicholas Charity and may form part of a published paper or book later. Aggregated findings may also be presented at relevant conferences. You or your setting will not be personally identified in any publication.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The research is being funded by Montessori St. Nicholas Charity and carried out by academics from the Open University, which will be providing insurance.

Who has reviewed the study?

This project has been approved by the Open University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) and adheres to OU ethics review processes (HREC reference no. 3398). All data will be collected, processed and stored in accordance with data protection legislation.

Further information

You are welcome to see the results and findings once the research is complete and the report is

written and published. At completion and when the research findings are published you are welcome to express your feelings about the research, the researchers and your participation. For any other queries, please contact the researchers in the first instance on the details given above. Thank you for taking the time to read this information regardless whether you decide to participate or not.

Please read the following statements and then click the box to confirm you agree to take part in this study.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information presented above. I have had opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I can choose not to take part. I understand that if I begin the survey, I am free to stop completing it at any time without giving any reason. However, it will not be possible for my responses to any completed questions to be removed from the survey as they will already be anonymous and aggregated.
3. I understand that the data collected during the study will be looked at by the research team from the Open University in aggregated (summary) format. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my data.
4. I agree for the data analysis on the aggregated set of data to be used in the report, in academic publications e.g. journals and book chapters, and at conferences. I understand that no identifying information will be asked of me.
5. I agree that quotations from any written responses I make to questions can be used for illustrative purposes in reporting the research, but that I will not be identified with those quotations.
6. I understand that all research data (e.g. question responses) may be stored for at least 10 years in accordance with University policy and the requirements for any publications which arise from the study.
7. I agree for my anonymised data to be used for this study and that it may be stored in a UK research data archive, subject to appropriate legal and ethical practices.

I have read the information above, and I agree to take part in the above study

Staff composition

For the follow set of questions, please include **all PAID staff**, including apprentices and unqualified staff who are not volunteers.

1. How many staff members are there in total in your setting?

We are interested in your provision for children within the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**.

Please answer all questions about the EYFS provision in your setting.

Staff Training and qualifications.

2. What early childhood qualifications (including Montessori) do staff members currently have?

Give number of staff holding qualifications in each category.

Staff Training and qualifications.

3. What early childhood qualifications (including Montessori) are staff members currently studying for?

Give number of staff in each category.

Staff Training and qualifications.

4. What Montessori qualifications do staff currently hold?

Give number of staff in each category (Montessori only qualifications).

Staff Training and qualifications.

5. What Montessori qualifications are staff currently studying for?

Give number of staff in each category. (Montessori only qualifications).

6a. What mandatory Continuing professional development (CPD) courses have staff members engaged in over the past two years.

| | Pediatric First Aid | Safeguarding | CIEH Food Safety |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Duration (days) | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| Number of staff participating | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| External Trainers? - type Y or N | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| Did Management pay costs? - type Y or N | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |

6b. What other Continuing professional development (CPD) courses have staff members engaged in over the past two years?

| | Course 1 | Course 2 | Course 3 |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Topic | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| Duration (days) | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| Number of staff participating | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| | Course 1 | Course 2 | Course 3 |
| External Trainers? - type Y or N | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| Did Management pay costs? - type Y or N | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |

7a. What do you see as the current challenges regarding staff training? Please write comments in the box below:

7b. What do you see as the current challenges regarding early years qualifications? Please write comments in the box below:

8a. What are your setting's priorities and plans for professional development of staff in the forthcoming 12 months? Please write comments in the box below:

8b. What would you like to see available in terms of professional development and qualifications? Please write comments in the box below:

Staff Turnover

9. How many current vacancies for practitioners do you have?

10a. How many staff members have left in the last two years?

10b. How many new starters have you had in the last two years?

11. What were staff members' reasons for leaving? Tick all that apply.

Moving to another geographic area

Moving to different sector - more money

Moving to different sector - better terms and conditions
Moving to different sector - new challenge/change of role
Moving within same sector - promotion

Moving within same sector - same grade
Retraining

Further or Higher Education

Family reasons - e.g. maternity leave
Other reasons (type in box below)

12. What recruitment challenges or issues has your setting faced, if any, in the past two years?

13. What are your setting's plans for recruitment in the forthcoming 12 months?

About your setting

14. What type of setting is this?

15. When was your most recent OFSTED rating?

16. What was your most recent OFSTED rating?

17. How many children of different ages on the roll in Sept 2019

Birth to 2 years

2 to 3 years

3 to 5 years

18. How many children are registered for attendance during each session?

Birth to 2 years

2 to 3 years

3 to 5 years

19. Indices of Multiple Deprivation

If you have already done this, please enter the number given below. If you have not done this already:

- Open a new web browser on your device.
- Please enter your postcode into the 'Postcode Lookup' box at the following location (copy and paste link) <http://imd-by-postcode.opendatacommunities.org/>.
- Download your 'custom deprivation data' by clicking on the 'xlsx' box
- Then note the number given in column F, Index of Multiple Deprivation Decile. Write that number below.

20. How many staff members are there in each of the following categories?

16 - 8 years

18.1 to 25years

25.1 to 40years

40.1 to 55years

55.1 to 65years

Over 65 years

21 & 22 How many staff members are:

Permanent staff
Temporary staff

23. How many staff members identify as:

Male
Female
Prefer not to say

24a. How many staff members identify as:

White - English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British
White - Irish
Gypsy or Irish Traveler
Any other White Background
White and Black Caribbean
White and Black African
White and Asian
Any other mixed/multiple ethnic group
Indian
Pakistani
Chinese
Any other Asian background
African
Caribbean
Any other Black/African/Caribbean background
Arab
Any other Ethnic group

24b. How many staff members identify as:

Non-UK nationals outside EU
EU Nationals outside UK

25. How many staff members have disclosed a disability?

26. How long have staff members worked in this setting? Give number of staff members for each category:

1 year
1.1 to 3 years
3.1 to 5 years
5.1 to 10 years
Over 10 years

27 How long have staff members worked in the early childhood education and care sector? Give number of staff members for each category:

- 1 year
- 1.1 to 3 years
- 3.1 to 5 years
- 5.1 to 10 years
- Over 10 years

Deployment of staff

28a. What is the highest qualification of staff members working directly with children aged birth to 2 years?

- Level 2
- Level 3
- Level 4
- Level 5 (e.g. foundation degree)
- Level 6
- Early Years Teacher Status/Early Years Professional Status
- QTS/PGCE
- Level 7 (e.g. MA/MEd)
- Level 8 (e.g. PhD, EdD)
- Other
- (please state)

28b. What is the highest qualification of staff members working directly with children aged 2.1 to 3 years?

- Level 2
- Level 3
- Level 4
- Level 5 (e.g. foundation degree)
- Level 6
- Early Years Teacher Status/Early Years Professional Status
- QTS/PGCE
- Level 7 (e.g. MA/MEd)
- Level 8 (e.g. PhD, EdD)
- Other
- (please state)

28c. What is the highest qualification of staff members working directly with children aged 3.1 to 4+ years?

- Level 2
- Level 3
- Level 4
- Level 5 (e.g. foundation degree)
- Level 6
- Early Years Teacher Status/Early Years Professional

Status QTS/PGCE

Level 7 (e.g.

MA/MEd)

Level 8 (e.g.

PhD,EdD)

Other

(please

state)

Hourly rates of pay

29. How many staff members are on the following rates of pay? e.g. if 2 members of staff are paid £9 an hour, then put a 2 in the corresponding box.

Less than £6

£6-£7

£7.01 - £7.50

£7.51 - £8

£8.01 - £8.50

£8.51 - £9

£9.01 - £9.50

£9.51 - £10

£10+

30. Do you have any comments you would like to add at this point?

Appendix 2 Reported professional development courses

Professional development courses in order of frequency.

| |
|--------------------------------|
| 17 SEND |
| 8 Communication Language |
| 8 Forest School |
| 7 Leadership Management |
| 6 Prevent |
| 5 Conference |
| 5 Safeguarding |
| 4 Autism |
| 4 Outdoor Play |
| 4 Positive Language |
| 4 Schemas |
| 4 Wellbeing |
| 3 Challenging Behaviour |
| 3 Effective Learning |
| 3 Fire Safety |
| 3 GDPR |
| 3 Health Safety |
| 3 OFSTED |
| 2 Channel Awareness |
| 2 DV_FGM |
| 2 EYFS Revisited |
| 2 Heuristic Play |
| 2 Intent Implementation Impact |
| 2 Letters Sounds |
| 2 Makaton |
| 2 Materials |
| 2 Maths |
| 2 Positive Behaviour |
| 2 Risk Assessment |
| 2 Safer Recruitment |
| 2 Social Emotional |
| 2 Step-on |
| 1 Adoption |

| |
|-----------------------------------|
| 1 Adverse Childhood Experiences |
| 1 Art Therapy |
| 1 Boys will be boys |
| 1 British Values |
| 1 Curiosity Approach |
| 1 Difficult Conversations |
| 1 EHCP Writing |
| 1 Gesture Training |
| 1 Global Citizenship |
| 1 Growth Mindset |
| 1 Hanen |
| 1 Learning Development |
| 1 Level_2 |
| 1 Listening young people |
| 1 Manual Handling |
| 1 MCI Diploma |
| 1 Mental Health |
| 1 MMI Movement music |
| 1 MMI Observation |
| 1 Montessori Classroom Management |
| 1 Montessori_Literacy1 |
| 1 Movement Learning |
| 1 Music |
| 1 Observation |
| 1 Peace Curriculum |
| 1 Philosophy |
| 1 Phonics |
| 1 Play Therapy |
| 1 Quality Teaching |
| 1 Record Keeping |
| 1 Supporting 2-year-olds |
| 1 Sustainable Leadership |
| 1 Yoga Mindfulness |

